

Foreword

“Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and see. For one who knows what, for one who sees what, does the destruction of the taints come about? The destruction of the taints comes about -

1. for one who knows and sees: ‘This is the Noble Truth of Suffering’;
2. for one who knows and sees: ‘This is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering’;
3. for one who knows and sees: ‘This is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering’;
4. for one who knows and sees ‘This is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering’.

“It is for one who knows thus, for one who sees thus, that the destruction of the taints comes about.”

“Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: ‘this is The Noble Truth of Suffering. An exertion should be made to understand: ‘this is The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering’. An exertion should be made to understand: ‘this is The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. An exertion should be made to understand: ‘this is The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering.’”

This is the “Asavakkhaya Sutta” (“the destruction of the Taints”) of the Saccasamyutta. In this sutta the Buddha taught that without having realized The Four Noble Truths, the destruction of the taints is impossible; but having realized The Four Noble Truths, the destruction of the taints is possible.

If a meditator wants to realize the destruction of the taints or to become a noble one (Ariya), he must first realize The Four Noble Truths. Among these four, The Noble Truth of Suffering (Dukkhasacca) and The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (Samudayasacca) are the objects of insight knowledge (Vipassanā).

First of all, a meditator should try to realize The Noble Truth of suffering. What is The Noble Truth of Suffering? In the “Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta” (“The Setting in Motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma”), the Buddha explains in brief that, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering. And in the “Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta”, the ‘Great Sutta on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness’, He explains:

“And what bhikkhus, in brief, are the five aggregates of clinging? They are as follows:

- 1) the materiality aggregate of clinging;
- 2) the feeling aggregate of clinging;
- 3) the perception aggregate of clinging;
- 4) the mental formations aggregate of clinging;
- 5) the consciousness aggregate of clinging.”

In this book, the author compiles information from the Pāli texts to help the reader understand these five aggregates which are equivalent to consciousness, mental factors and matter, and thus lay a foundation for a basic understanding of Abhidhamma. The Abhidhamma’s function, on the other hand, is to provide a unified and detailed picture, or “map,” of the five aggregates from the perspective of ultimate mentality and ultimate materiality. Without such a map to guide one’s progress, one may easily fall prey to the numerous pitfalls of wrong view and never arrive at a correct understanding of The First Noble Truth.

Before one can realize Nibbāna, The Third Noble Truth, one needs to know and see not only The First Noble Truth, but also The Second Noble Truth - The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. In the Tittthāyatana Sutta of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha explains The Second Noble Truth as follows:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering?

- with ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be];
- with volitional formations as condition, consciousness;
- with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality;
- with mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense-bases;
- with the six sense-bases as condition, contact;
- with contact as condition, feeling;
- with feeling as condition, craving;
- with craving as condition, clinging;
- with clinging as condition, becoming;
- with becoming as condition, birth;
- with birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair come to be.

This is the origin of the whole mass of suffering. This, bhikkhus, is called The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.”

When one's vipassanā insight knowledge matures through The Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Eightfold Path, one knows and sees the unconditioned element (Asaṅkhata-dhātu) Nibbāna. Thus, one realizes The Third Noble Truth. There are four levels of Path knowledge, which destroy the taints, or defilements, stage by stage. At each stage, the meditator's understanding of The Four Noble Truths grows clearer and clearer, gradually dispelling the clouds of ignorance that have shrouded the mind in darkness for so many lifetimes.

The author presents The Four Noble Truths in the Abhidhamma's perspective, which is the most profound way to explain the Dhamma, with practical examples from various angles, in great clarity that can be easily understood by the average person. It also enables one to make sense of the Buddha's teachings from another perspective. It is empowering and enlightening as it relates, links, and provide the rationale to one's life experiences, meditation practice experiences, and the intellectual understanding of the dhamma, regardless of whichever traditions and creed one is from.

I highly recommend this book to those who wish to gain a comprehensive understanding of Abhidhamma and its benefits, not only in the practice of meditation, in the direction of one's life, but also in one's daily activities. The reader will find this book transforming since the author had clearly explained which types of activities are wholesome and which types are unwholesome. Furthermore, she gave the rationale and the consequences of committing them.

For a Buddhist to understand which activities are wholesome (kusala), and which activities are unwholesome (akusala) is very important. Only endowed with this understanding, will one be able to accumulate wholesome dhammas for one's own benefits as well as others, and avoid accumulating unwholesome ones.

Among the wholesome dhammas described in this book, the threefold training of morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā) is most vital. **Without this threefold training, there is no Path. And without the Path, there can be no Path Knowledge. Without Path Knowledge, there can be no Cessation of Suffering,** so one cannot possibly liberate oneself from the cycle of saṃsāric existence. **Therefore this threefold**

training, in fact, is the one most essential dhamma for the attainment of Nibbāna.

May all living beings find the opportunity to undertake this threefold training, and may they experience the timeless peace and happiness of Nibbāna.

Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw
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PREFACE

The book is derived from a series of talks on Abhidhamma which were presented on my trips to Canada and America in 2002. As the audience found these talks immensely useful and relevant to their daily lives, I feel it is vital to preserve the precious teachings (dhamma) handed down from the Buddha's omniscient wisdom, to be available to all. Hence the idea of putting these talks into a book came to me.

Abhidhamma appears dull, complicated, difficult to understand, irrelevant to most, in daily life and meditation practices. Therefore it is largely ignored. I intend to make Abhidhamma easier and accessible to all, by using simple, direct language to explain the profound Abhidhamma concepts, while keeping the essence of Dhamma. In this way, I have extracted the essence of Abhidhamma and relate the importance of it to one's daily life and meditation practice, putting them into context that is easily understood. It is my sincere wish that this book reaches and benefits more people, assisting them to acknowledge and receive the immense value and usefulness of Abhidhamma in the path leading to happiness, both mundane and supramundane.

I hope the effect of this dhamma will enable you to understand the subtle workings of your mind, so that it will inspire you with the spiritual urgency to "avoid evil, do good and purify your mind", which is the core teachings of the Buddha.

The practical aspects of Abhidhamma set out in this book, are attributable to the Most Respectable Venerable U Āciṇṇa, Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, from his many years experience of teaching samatha and vipassanā meditations based on Abhidhamma. I shall also be sharing with you, many of the actual insights experienced by meditators at Pa-Auk Forest Monastery.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness and utmost gratitude to my master, The Most Venerable Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw, who had untiringly taught me Abhidhamma and meditation. He encouraged this project with innumerable helpful suggestions and he rejoiced with me in its completion. My appreciation to him is beyond what words can adequately express, as he has patiently and unfailingly guided me in the dhamma, during my long years of association with him.

Acknowledgement is gratefully made to the helpful contributions to this book, by the following works mentioned in the Bibliography, in particular, 'A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma' by Bhikkhu Bodhi and the works of Pa-Auk Tawya Sayadaw.

I would like to thank profusely Maureen Bodenbach, without whose help this book would not have materialised. She accompanied me on the teaching trips for the entire four months in Canada and America, taking good care of my physical well-being, assisting me with the English language, doing the typing and taking great pains to draw the diagrams and charts. My special thanks to Tilaka De Zoysa and her group, for so kindly provided for most of my needs. When I left America, the first draft of the book was completed. I thank Venerable U Kuṇḍadhāna for helping with the correct fonts. I would also like to acknowledge the following people who had graciously given their effort and time to help me with this book: Eddie Barin, Casey Goh, Teo Su Chen, Ng Wai Chong, Joey Chang, Dorothy Soo, and Kim Lim. Finally, my special appreciation to Laurene Lam, whose contribution makes this final version possible.

I solely take the total responsibility for any inaccuracy in words or content in this book with regards to the dhamma. I dedicate all merits accrued from this book to my teachers, parents, relatives, friends, readers and all who had contributed to this work in one way or another.

May these merits be shared with all sentient beings.

May all beings be well and happy.

May all beings be able to practice the three-fold training of

Morality, Concentration and Wisdom, appropriately and successfully.

Sayalay

Susīlā

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**UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERY OF MIND AND
BODY
Through the Abhidhamma**

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa
Homage to Him, the Exalted, the Worthy, the Fully Enlightened
One

Introduction

Mind leads the world.

How true is it? Only when we understand how the mind works, will we be truly convinced. Mind is something so close to us, and yet so far from our understanding. Mind is the culprit behind all of our unwholesome bodily actions and speech, and it is also the director of our good behaviour that soothes everyone's heart.

The study of Abhidhamma helps us to understand how the mind works, which is the essential factor for us to lead a happy and blameless life. In Abhidhamma, the ultimate reality of mind-and-matter, which makes up this so-called being, is minutely defined into the process of its momentary arising and passing away, dependent on causes and conditions. Thus, the study of Abhidhamma also helps to shed the illusion of 'I' or of a permanent self. Most of the problems in life spring from the ignorance and craving of 'I' or the self-centredness of 'I'. However, when one understands that there is no 'I' in the ultimate sense, through practical meditation experience based on Abhidhamma, one will be able to let go of the intense clinging to it.

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, one of the three collections (*tipiṭaka*), is an exposition of ultimate realities in detail. Abhidhamma is a combination of two words: *Abhi* and *Dhamma*. *Abhi* means higher, special, or sublime. *Dhamma* means Ultimate Realities or Teachings. Hence, Abhidhamma is that which exceeds and is distinguished from the *Dhamma*. Why? It is because all *Dhammas* are fully classified and explained by the Buddha in Abhidhamma, but is only partially expounded in Suttas. It is the precious teaching of Buddha's unimpeded omniscient knowledge (*sabba ñāṭṭa-ñāṇa*), acquired through a long period of four incalculable aeons (*asaṅkheyya*) and a hundred thousand aeons (*kappas*). The Theravada tradition regards the Abhidhamma, as the most perfect expression of the true nature of existence that had been apprehended by the penetrative mind of a Fully Enlightened One.

Abhidhamma expound the Higher Teachings that deals only with Ultimate Realities, or Truths. According to the Abhidhamma philosophy, there are two types of truth:

1. **Conventional Truth** (*sammuti sacca*)
2. **Ultimate Truth** (*paramattha sacca*)

1. **Conventional Truth**

Conventional truth refers to ordinary conceptual thought or commonly accepted truth, like tree, house, table, men, women, persons, beings, etc. This is the everyday language we use. We think that these things are something real, that they actually exist. Yes, they seem to exist but if we examine conventional truths closely, we will find that they do not exist as irreducible realities. We can extract ultimate truth from conventional truth.

This can be actualized by the practice of Four Elements Meditation¹. Initially the meditator discerns repeatedly the four elements - earth element, water element, fire element, and wind element - from the head down to the soles of the feet again and again. When the concentration deepens and approaches access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), he will see different kinds of light from grey to white, and then the whole body will appear as a white form. If he continues to discern the four elements in the white form, the whole body becomes transparent like an ice block. When he looks for space within the transparent block, the transparent form breaks down into thousands of billions of particles, called *rūpa kalāpas*, sub-atomic particles. The size of one *rūpa kalāpa* is smaller than an atom. With the strength of access concentration, one can penetrate into each particle, and find that it contains at least eight elements called pure octad-kalāpa. Some have nine, ten, or more elements as in body-decad kalāpa:

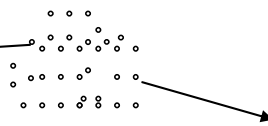
RŪPA KALĀPAS IN THE BODY

Chart

1

The Pure Octad Kalāpa

- 1) Earth element (*pathavīdhātu*)
- 2) Water element (*āpodhātu*)
- 3) Fire element (*tejodhātu*)
- 4) Wind element (*vāyodhātu*)



¹ For detail practice, refer to Four Element Meditation in Samatha Section.

5) Color (<i>varṇa</i>)	◦◦◦◦◦◦◦◦◦◦	<u>The</u>	<u>Body-Decad</u>
<u>Kalāpa</u>			
6) Smell (<i>gandha</i>)	◦◦◦◦◦◦◦◦		1. Earth element
7) Taste (<i>rasa</i>)			2. Water element
8) Nutritive essence (<i>ojā</i>)			3. Fire element
			4. Wind element
			5. Colour
			6. Smell
			7. Taste
			8. Nutritive
essence			9. Life-faculty
			10. Body sensitivity

The eight elements of the pure octad kalāpa are called inseparable elements (*avinibbhoga-rūpas*) and they are the final, irreducible components of existence. They cannot be subdivided again. Therefore they are called ultimate realities. When the body is penetrated deeply inside, what can be found is only a group of ultimate realities. The body is only a concept, or conventional truth. So are external inanimate things like mountain, house, table, etc.. They are a combination of these eight elements, produced by temperature. How is matter produced by temperature? The fire element in each kalāpa, when it reaches the static stage produces new generations of rūpa kalāpas, and this process keeps repeating itself. This is called matter-produced-by-temperature. This can be realized by the practice of Four Elements Meditation. Thus by penetrating the conventional truth with concentration and wisdom, one eventually reaches ultimate truth.

2. Ultimate Truth

What is Ultimate Truth? Ultimate Truth means something that cannot be changed or subdivided into other things. It is something that really exists by reason of its own intrinsic nature (*sabhāva*). For example, the earth element in our bodies, as well as in inanimate things, exists in nature with the characteristic of hardness. Hardness is the intrinsic nature of earth element. The fire element exists in nature with the characteristic of heat. Each element in one rūpa kalāpa has its own intrinsic nature. They are the final, irreducible components of existence. They are themselves the final terms of analysis. So are consciousness and mental factors, which together are called *nāma*, the mind. The successive coming into existence of this nāma and rūpa, mind-and-

matter, in combination, is called a human being, or a deva, or a brahma, or a person, I, man and woman, animal, etc. “Human” is conventional truth; consciousness, mental factors and matter are ultimate truths. Ultimate truths are subtle and profound dhamma and cannot be seen by the naked eye, but they can be penetrated by a mind well trained in concentration and wisdom.

In Abhidhamma, Ultimate Reality is fourfold:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. Consciousness (<i>citta</i>) | } | conditioned dhamma |
| 2. Mental Factors (<i>cetasika</i>) | | |
| 3. Matter (<i>rūpa</i>) | } | unconditioned dhamma |
| 4. Nibbāna | | |

1) CONSCIOUSNESS

What is the meaning of consciousness (*citta*)? Many people do not understand the actual meaning of consciousness. They identify consciousness as ‘I’. When seeing-consciousness arises to perform the function of seeing, they say ‘I’ see or ‘she’ sees; when ear-consciousness arises to perform the function of hearing, they think ‘I’ hear or ‘she’ hears; when tongue-consciousness arises because of the impingement of the tongue-sensitivity and tastes, they say ‘I’ taste or ‘she’ tastes, etc. Actually *consciousness is just awareness of an object*. It is defined as pure awareness of an object, knowing an object or the process of cognizing an object. Here ‘awareness’ or ‘knowing’ does not mean comprehension by knowledge or wisdom. It means simply the ability to take in objects through the sense organs or sense sensitivities. Apart from the process of cognizing an object, there is no soul or self who hides behind or exercises control over the whole process of seeing, hearing, tasting, etc.

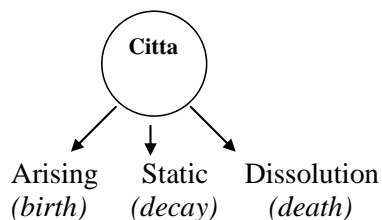
The knowing of an object is the *characteristic* of consciousness. Its *function* is to be a forerunner of the mental factors in that it presides over them and is always accompanied by them. It *manifests* in the meditator’s experience as a continuity of processes (*sandhāna*). Its *proximate cause* is mind-and-matter, as no consciousness can arise without being

accompanied by mental factors and matter.² In Pāli, *mano*, *citta*, and *viññāṇa* all have the same meaning as consciousness.

In a snap of the fingers, thousands of billions of moments of consciousness arise and pass away. So consciousness arises at tremendous speed, one after another. Two or three moments of consciousness cannot arise at the same time. Owing to the rapid arising and cessation of consciousness, when we watch the news on television, it seems that listening and seeing happen at the same time. We do not know that seeing-consciousness and hearing-consciousness are occurring at different times, one cognitive process after another.

Although consciousness arises and ceases at tremendous speed, every consciousness goes through the same three stages: arising (*uppāda*), static (*ṭhiti*), and dissolution (*bhaṅga*). Arising is birth, static is decay, and dissolution is death. In the ultimate sense we live only for one conscious moment, and not from conception up to death which is the conventional truth. Actually, with each moment of consciousness we are reborn and we die.

The Three Sub-moments of One Consciousness



Classification of Consciousness

A) Consciousness can be classified with respect to its nature (*jāti*) in four ways:

- i. **Unwholesome** (*akusala*)
- ii. **Wholesome** (*kusala*)
- iii. **Resultant** (*vipāka*)
- iv. **Functional** (*kiriya*)

² The exception is in the immaterial realm, where there is no matter.

I. Unwholesome consciousness.

There are twelve types of unwholesome consciousness (Appendix 1): eight rooted in greed, two rooted in hatred, and two rooted in delusion. Unwholesome consciousness is rooted in either one or two of the three evil roots: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*). For example, a man joyfully, has intercourse with an underaged girl, holding the view that there is no evil in his sexual misconduct. Such unwholesome bodily action is rooted in greed and delusion. Sometimes the same action may be accompanied by neutral feeling. Another example is when a person, out of rage, utters harsh speech to hurt another's feelings. Such unwholesome verbal action is rooted in anger and delusion. Unwholesome consciousness rooted in hatred is always accompanied by displeasure.

Greed and hatred cannot coexist in the same mind moment or same cognitive process, as their nature opposes each other. Greed has the nature of grasping and holding on while hatred has the nature of pushing away and destroying. Delusion is always present in every unwholesome state as an underlying root. It is mental blindness towards what is good or bad or the ignorance of the nature of conditional phenomena.

There are two types of consciousness rooted solely in delusion. One is associated with doubt and the other with restlessness. If one doubts the working of kamma and its results, that good begets good, bad begets bad, this is unwholesome consciousness associated with doubt, rooted in sheer delusion. Letting one's mind wanders at will without controlling it, is unwholesome consciousness associated with restlessness, rooted in sheer delusion. Both consciousness rooted in delusion are accompanied only by neutral feeling. With the exception of consciousness associated in restlessness, the remaining eleven unwholesome consciousness are potent enough to cast one to the four woeful planes.

Unwholesome action, speech and thought are always prompted by unwholesome consciousness rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion. In Pāli, unwholesome is called *akusala*. Why do we call it *akusala*? Because it is mentally unhealthy; morally blameworthy; leads to one's own affliction; or the affliction of others, or the affliction of both, and productive of painful result in the present life as well as the life after.

II. Wholesome consciousness.

There are eight types of sense-sphere wholesome consciousness (Appendix 2), either rooted in two or three of the three wholesome roots: non-greed (*alobha*), non-hatred (*adosa*), and non-delusion (*amoha*). For

example, a boy spontaneously and joyfully offers some fruits to the monk upon seeing him coming for alms round. He understands that this is a wholesome deed that would produce good result. His wholesome bodily action is rooted in the three wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. Being able to give up or having non-attachment to his belonging is manifestation of non-greed or generosity. The good will and kindness he has for the monk is the manifestation of non-hatred or loving-kindness. The knowledge of kamma and its result is manifestation of non-delusion or wisdom. But if the same action is performed without knowledge of kamma and its result, and with neutral feeling, it will be rooted in the two wholesome roots of non-greed and non-hatred, but without non-delusion or wisdom. When such wholesome action or kamma ripens, he will be reborn as a rich person, but possibly dull-witted, without much joyful feelings.

For those who practise concentration and attain absorption or those who are able to discern the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self nature of mentality and materiality, their wholesome consciousness is always accompanied by the three wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. In Pāli, wholesome is called *kusala*. Why do we call it *kusala*? Because it is mentally healthy; morally praiseworthy; does not lead to one's own affliction; or the affliction of others; or the affliction of both, and productive of pleasant result in the present life as well as the life hereafter.

III. Resultant consciousness.

Both sense-sphere wholesome and unwholesome consciousness constitutes kamma. And the result of these two is called resultant consciousness, *vipāka citta*. For example, the five types of sense consciousness such as eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, and so on, as well as rebirth consciousness (*paṭisandhi citta*) and life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*), are all resultant consciousness. They arise due to past wholesome and unwholesome kamma.

IV. Functional consciousness.

Functional consciousness is neither kamma nor the result of kamma. It involves activity that is not capable of producing kammic result. So both resultant and functional consciousness is kammically indeterminate. For example, five-door advertent consciousness, which adverts to the five sense objects, is functional consciousness. When Arahants perform an action, such as serving the teacher, preaching a sermon, teaching meditation, and practising samatha and vipassanā, their consciousness is also functional

consciousness, which is incapable of producing its result since an Arahant has eliminated all the defilements. Kamma will produce result only when it is supported by craving. Arahants have uprooted all cravings hence their actions are incapable of producing any results.

COGNITIVE PROCESS (*vīhi*)

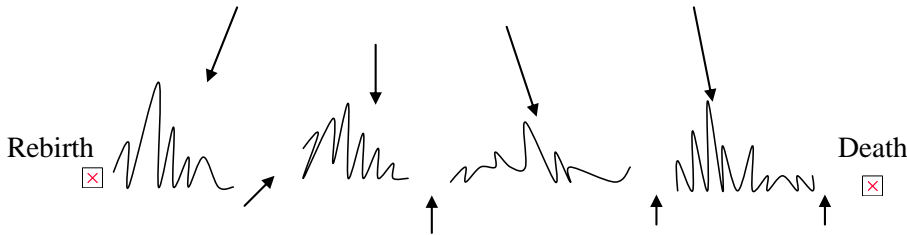
Consciousness occurs in two ways:

- 1) **Cognitive process (*citta vīhi*)**
 - a) *Five-door Cognitive Process*
 - b) *Mind-door Cognitive Process*
- 2) **Process-freed (*vīhimutta*)**, on the occasion of rebirth, bhavaṅga, and death.

Before discussing the cognitive process, first we need to understand *bhavaṅga* or life-continuum. *Bhavaṅga* is the combination of two words: *bhava* and *aṅga*. *Bhava* is existence, *aṅga* is factor: so *bhavaṅga* means factor of existence, which is the indispensable condition of existence. The function of *bhavaṅga* consciousness is to preserve the continuity of the mental stream through the duration of any single existence, from conception to death.

Within one lifetime, the first *bhavaṅga* is called rebirth consciousness, and the last *bhavaṅga* is called death consciousness. The *bhavaṅgas* which arise in between rebirth consciousness and death consciousness are called *bhavaṅga* consciousness. They are resultant consciousness produced by previous kamma. When there is no cognitive process taking place, the *bhavaṅga* consciousness, which are process-freed, arise and pass away every moment during life, to preserve the continuity of existence. This is because the mental stream cannot stop flowing, as the causes for its arising are still intact, that is, the kamma that produces this life is not yet exhausted.

(*Cognitive process* is active because of the force of greed, hatred and delusion, or non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion)



(In between cognitive processes, the mental stream cannot stop.
So what maintains the continuity of consciousness?)



(Bhavaṅga consciousness arises between two cognitive processes in order to maintain the continuity of consciousness of existence between birth and death. It is the passive phase of consciousness as compared to the cognitive process.)

There is an occasion when the mental stream can be temporarily cut off: when an Anāgāmi or an Arahant enters into Attainment of Cessation, (*nirodha samāpatti*). But Attainment of Cessation can only be realized by an Anāgāmi or Arahant who possesses the eight attainments.³ Sometimes they may feel weary of the constant arising and passing away of mind-and-matter, and so will enter into Attainment of Cessation, to stop the arising of mind and consciousness-born matter for perhaps one day, three days, or up to seven days according to their prior determination. The mental stream is cut off completely and forever only after the *Parinibbāna* of an Arahant, since the defilements that produce the round of rebirths have been uprooted completely by the Arahant path knowledge.

³ The eight attainments are: 1) first jhāna 2) second jhāna 3) third jhāna 4) fourth jhāna 5) the base of infinite space (*ākāśañāṇāyatana*) 6) the base of infinite consciousness (*viññāṇañāṇāyatana*) 7) the base of nothingness (*ākāśañāṇāyatana*) 8) the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n'evasaññān'āñāṇāyatana*).

Since bhavaṅga citta is resultant consciousness, it is the passive phase of consciousness. It takes as its object the sign of the near-death cognitive process of the immediate past life (refer to the process of rebirth and death). Since the object is not a present-life object, we are not aware of it, just like we are not aware of our past life. When we are in deep dreamless sleep, bhavaṅga citta will arise and pass away in every moment, flowing on like a stream to maintain the continuity of existence. Bhavaṅga citta also arise in between two cognitive processes, after one finishes and before another arises. New practitioners, when developing their concentration on the meditation object, owing to the weakness of mindfulness, sometimes let their minds fall into the bhavaṅga state. At that time they are not aware of anything except feeling peaceful. Some mistakenly think that mind and matter have stopped. Actually at that moment, bhavaṅga citta arise successively. They are unable to discern them because of the subtlety of bhavaṅga mind states.

Now that we understand the function of bhavaṅga, let us go back to the occurrences of consciousness in the cognitive process. There are two types of cognitive processes: five-door cognitive process and mind-door cognitive process.

FIVE-DOOR COGNITIVE PROCESS

Five-door cognitive process includes:

- 1) eye-door cognitive process
- 2) ear-door cognitive process
- 3) nose-door cognitive process
- 4) tongue-door cognitive process
- 5) body-door cognitive process

When citta arise cognizing an object at the sense doors, they do not occur at random but occur in a series consisting of seventeen separate moments of consciousness, that arise one after another in a certain order, which is in accordance with the fixed law of consciousness, or *citta niyāma*.

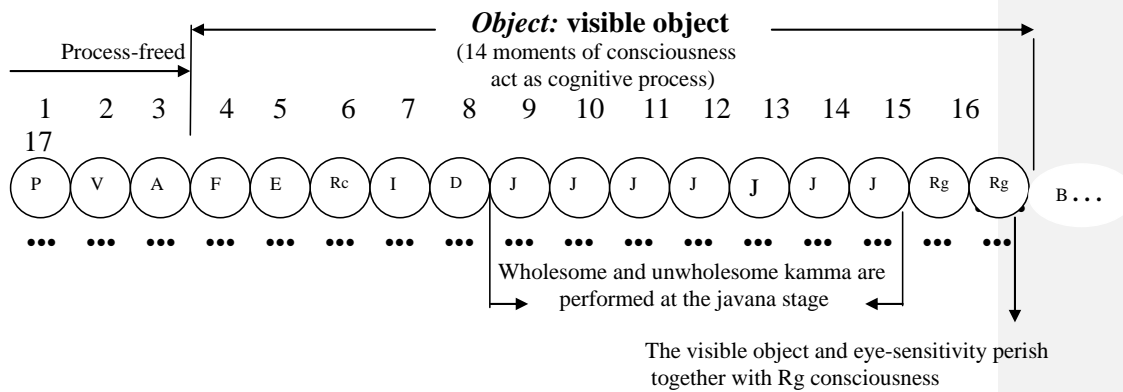
Eye-door cognitive process

When no active cognitive process is taking place, the bhavaṅga citta flows on one after another continuously. At that moment when a visible object impinges on the eye-sensitivity and bhavaṅga simultaneously, the

series of seventeen moments of consciousness called eye-door cognitive process runs as follows:

FIVE-DOOR COGNITIVE PROCESS
(Eye-Door Cognitive Process)

Chart 2



NOTE: Each circle represents one consciousness moment. The three bullets below each circle represent the sub-moments of each consciousness moment: arising, static, and dissolution.

KEY: P = past bhavaṅga; V = vibrating bhavaṅga; A = arrest bhavaṅga;

F = five door adverting consciousness; E = eye-consciousness; Rc = receiving consciousness;

I = investigating consciousness; D = determining consciousness; J = javana;

Rg = registering consciousness; B = bhavaṅga.

- 1) **Past bhavaṅga (atīta-bhavaṅga):** One bhavaṅga passes away, thus it is past bhavaṅga.
- 2) **Vibrating bhavaṅga (bhavaṅga-calana):** because of the impingement of the visible object, the bhavaṅga vibrates.
- 3) **Arrest bhavaṅga (bhavaṅgupaccheda):** the bhavaṅga stream is cut off in order to give way to the cognitive process to apprehend the new sense object.

The above three bhavaṅga cittas are process-freed consciousness.

- 4) **Five-door adverting consciousness (*pañca-dvārāvajjana*):** the first cognitive process is now set up. It adverts the mind towards the sense or visible object, as if the mind is inquiring, “What is this?” It is functional consciousness.
- 5) **Eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-viññāṇa*):** it performs the function of seeing the visible object. It only sees the color, not the shape and form of the object yet. If the object is sound, ear-consciousness arises hearing the sound; if it is taste, then tongue-consciousness arises knowing the taste. The type of sense consciousness that arises depends on the corresponding sense object. As many billions of consciousness arise and vanish within the snap of a finger, we mistakenly think that we perceive a form as soon as we see it; that we know a sound as soon as we hear it; that we know the taste as soon as we taste it. Actually, at this point, the object is at its rudimentary stage, and is still not clear yet. The five types of sense consciousness⁴ are resultant consciousness produced by previous kamma.
- 6) **Receiving consciousness (*sampañcchana*):** receives that visible object. It is resultant consciousness.
- 7) **Investigating consciousness (*santīraṇa*):** investigates that visible object. It is resultant consciousness.
- 8) **Determining consciousness (*voṭṭhapana*):** determines the visible object. It is functional consciousness.

These types of consciousness (4 to 8), up to the determining consciousness, arise in spite of ourselves, and cannot be controlled. The resultant consciousness namely seeing consciousness, receiving consciousness, and investigating consciousness are the effects of actions (kamma) performed in past lives.

- 9-15) **Seven javanas:** *javana* consciousness runs seven times. These seven are all the same kind of consciousness. They are either the same kind of wholesome consciousness rooted in non-greed, non-hatred, or non-delusion, or the same kind of unwholesome consciousness rooted in greed, hatred, or delusion, and they run seven times swiftly over the object, in the act of apprehending it.

⁴ Eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness and body consciousness.

Javana literally means “running swiftly.” It is at this stage that the object is fully experienced. The javana stage is the most important from an ethical standpoint, since it is here that good or bad kamma is originated or performed. Unlike the preceding consciousnesses, which are rootless, javana consciousness has either the unwholesome roots of greed, hatred, or delusion or the wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred, or non-delusion, and these six roots are the underlying sources of motivation that bring forth kamma. Just as a tree with roots is more stable and firm, consciousness at the javana stage is more stable, firm, and forceful compared with the rootless consciousness. Thus *kamma* means all wholesome and unwholesome volitions, having the three evil roots or three moral roots.

How we react towards the object, mostly depends on our accumulated tendencies along the rounds of rebirth. If someone has accumulated a great deal of greed, consciousness rooted in greed is likely to arise when the object is pleasant. On the other hand, if someone has accumulated a great deal of hatred, consciousness rooted in hatred is likely to arise when the visible object is unpleasant. If we react in the same pattern all the time, its force is gradually reinforced and it will become our second nature, like a snowball that rolls down a snowy hill, getting bigger and bigger.

Suppose you react carelessly or without mindfulness, taking delight in the visible object, then unwholesome consciousness rooted in greed arises seven times. On the other hand, if you dislike or feel frustrated with the visible object, then unwholesome consciousness rooted in anger will arise and pass away seven times. It means immoral kamma is performed. Thus javana is very important, because it involves wholesome kamma and unwholesome kamma, which you have to pay for, when the result ripens.

- 16-17) **Registering consciousness (*tadārammaṇa*):** After seven javanas, two registering consciousnesses arise and pass away, taking the same object as the javanas. *Tadārammaṇa* literally means “having that object” that had been apprehended by the javanas. Just as a man who is running fast has to slow down for a few steps before coming to a stop, registration arises twice following the javanas to slow down their force before the mind lapses back into the bhavaṅga stream. At this point the cognitive process comes to an end, together with the perishing away of the visible object and eye-sensitivity.

When the life span of matter is complete, the eye-door cognitive process comes to an end. Such a cognitive process occurs when the object is very great, which means it has struck the mind with great intensity, and is called the course ending in registration. In eye-door cognitive process, except for eye-consciousness, which arises depending on eye-sensitivity, the rest of the consciousness arises depending on the heart base.

The first consciousness to the third is process-freed. The fourth consciousness up to the seventeenth belongs to the actual cognitive process. Sometimes when the object is not very prominent to the senses, the two moments of registering consciousness will not arise. The cognitive process then stops at the javana stage, and the mind lapses into bhavaṅga again.

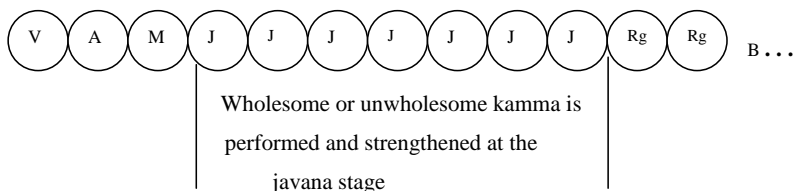
When there is only a slight object, which means the impact of the object on the mind is not strong, the cognitive process stops at determining consciousness. And when the object is very slight, there is no cognitive process at all, only bhavaṅga vibrates for a few moments.

After the eye-door cognitive process, bhavaṅga arises and ceases successively one after another until the mind-door cognitive process arises, in order to apprehend this visible object more clearly. It is a fix law that bhavaṅgas must arise after each cognitive process. How many moments of bhavaṅga citta arise and pass away in between two cognitive processes, depends on the stage of your mind development. The shorter it is the better. It shows the alertness of your mind.

MIND-DOOR COGNITIVE PROCESS

Mind-Door Cognitive Process 1

Chart 3





KEY: V = vibrating bhavaṅga; A = arrest bhavaṅga; M = mind-door adverting consciousness;
J = javana; Rg = registering consciousness; B = bhavaṅga.

The mind-door cognitive process is slightly different from the five-door cognitive process. After an eye-door cognitive process, many bhavaṅga cittas arise, followed by a mind-door cognitive process, which takes the same visible object, that has already perished, as past object. In the mind-door cognitive process, first, one bhavaṅga vibrates, then another bhavaṅga citta is arrested, follow by mind-door adverting consciousness which adverts the mind to that past visible object. Immediately, javana consciousness arises seven times, to apprehend or cognise that 'past' visible object. After seven javanas, two moments of registering consciousness occur, then the mind-door cognitive process finishes, and the mind lapses into bhavaṅga again.

In the case of an obscure object, the two moments of registration do not occur. Many mind-door cognitive processes follow afterwards, in order to cognise clearly the color, name, form and shape of the visible object and the reaction towards it. The first mind-door cognitive process recognises the past visible object, which has already perished with the five-door cognitive process. The second mind-door cognitive process recognises the name of the visible object. The third mind-door cognitive process recognises the shape or form of that visible object. In the following mind-door cognitive process, one begins to develop like or dislike towards the visible object, in which kamma then is strongly performed.

Starting from the fourth mind-door cognitive process, the kamma performed is heavier than in the five-door cognitive process and the first to third mind-door thought processes. This is because when the object becomes clearer, the reaction to it also becomes stronger. Suppose one gets angry at the visible object. Consciousness rooted in anger will run for seven times. Since many mind-door cognitive processes follow one after another, consciousness rooted in anger will arise in succession countless times, as mind arises and passes away at tremendous speed. With one snap of the fingers thousands of billions of moments of consciousness arise, then if one gets angry for five minutes, uncountable billions of unwholesome kamma are

produced and leave behind unwholesome kammic potency in the stream of consciousness. Similarly, if one reacts with jealousy, meanness and cruelty towards an object, the consciousness rooted in anger will arise continuously until you change your mental state. On the other hand, if one gets attached to a visible object, consciousness rooted in greed will arise successively in javana stage countless times.

Each javana has potentiality to produce its result either in the present life or the lives hereafter, uncountable billions of latent effects lay waiting to emerge when conditions permit. So be careful, as even small unwholesome acts multiply. As it says in the Dhammapada, "Do not think lightly of evil, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Even a water-pot is filled by the falling of drops. Likewise the fool, gathering it drop by drop, fills himself with evil."

However, these unwholesome javanas are not fixed, like resultant and functional consciousness. We are our own 'master'. We can exercise control over our own mental states and change unwholesome javanas into wholesome through wise attention (*yoniso manasikāra*).

For example, when a man sees a beautiful girl, instead of giving rise to lustful thoughts, he can contemplate the impurities of the human body. How? He contemplates this body consists of skin, flesh, bones, blood, pus, faeces, sweat, fats and so on. He changes his perception of beauty to the perception of repulsiveness, resulting in the lustful thoughts losing its enticement.

In Sri Lanka, there was a monk called Tissa, who habitually practised skeleton meditation and vipassanā. One day while going for almsround, on the way he heard a woman's laughter and when he looked up, he saw her set of teeth. Then he quickly contemplated the skeleton externally, then internally and achieved the first jhāna and proceeded to vipassanā. A few minutes later, the husband searching for his wife, asked the monk if he had seen a beautiful woman passing by. His reply was he did not see a woman, only a skeleton. Thus, this is one of the ways to replace unarisen unwholesome thoughts to wholesome thoughts, through wise attention.

When one meets with misery, fears, or unhappiness which is a part of life such as: loss of love ones or wealth; ill-treatment, blamed or accused unjustly; divorce or sexually abused; cheated and defamed; and the suffering of bad health. Instead of lamentation and despair by beating one's heart, wailing away which is actually a sign of anger, one should try to recall the Teachings of the Buddha by reflecting on 'this is the result of my past unwholesome kamma' and therefore, accept it with equanimity. As the Buddha said, "I am the owner of my own kamma, heir of my kamma, born of my kamma; related to my kamma; abide supported by my kamma; whatever kamma I shall do, whether good or bad, of that I shall be the heir". Reflecting

thus, one not only alleviates one's suffering and anger by skilful wise attention, but is also able to leave behind good mental kamma, based on right view of *kammassakata*, (that all beings are the owners of their own kamma).

To see whatever happens as they really are as impermanent, suffering and as a manifestation of cause and effect, is also helpful to change unwholesome javanas into wholesome javanas.

If we make a habit to always respond with generosity, loving-kindness, patience, honesty and compassion towards the object (supposing beings are the object), then wholesome consciousness rooted in non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion, will arise successively incalculable times, leaving behind beautiful kammic potency in one's stream of consciousness. When that kamma produces its result in future life, one will be reborn in a wealthy family and has a kind temperament (*carita*), full of loving-kindness, beautiful appearance, straightforwardness and loved by many.

If one has the ability to penetrate the nature of the visible object as impermanence, suffering and non-self with vipassanā knowledge, many mind-door cognitive processes associated with vipassanā knowledge will arise successively uncountable times, leaving behind powerful kammic potency in the stream of consciousness. When the result ripens and produces rebirth consciousness in future lives, one will become a person endowed with sharp wisdom. If one practises vipassanā meditation in that life, easily and swiftly, one will realize Nibbāna. Thus, it is said in the Dhammapada, "Do not think lightly of good, saying, 'It will not come to me.' Even a water-pot is filled by the falling of drops, so the wise man, gathering it drop by drop, fills himself with good".

At the sense-sphere javana stage, kamma or action may be performed by body, speech, or thought.

The unwholesome bodily actions are:

- 1) Killing - killing living beings, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings.
- 2) Taking what is not given - taking by way of theft, the wealth and property of others.
- 3) Sexual misconduct - misconducting oneself in sexual pleasures; having intercourse with such women as are protected by their mother, father, sisters, brothers or relatives, who has a husband and who are protected by law.

The wholesome bodily actions are abstaining from committing these three.

The unwholesome verbal actions are:

- 1) Telling lies - speaking falsehood for one's own good or for another's good.
- 2) Slander - speaking maliciously; repeats elsewhere what has been heard, in order to divide people, or vice versa.
- 3) Harsh speech - uttering words which are rough, hard, hurtful or offensive to others.
- 4) Frivolous talk - speaking at the wrong time; speaks what is not fact, what is useless; speaks contrary to the truth or Dhamma; speaks words which are worthless, unreasonable, immoderate and unbeneficial.

Abstaining from these four is wholesome verbal action.

The unwholesome mental actions are:

- 1) Covetousness - the mental factor of greed, arisen with the wish to acquire another person's property.
- 2) Ill-will - the mental factor of hatred, arising with the wish that another being meets with harm and affliction.
- 3) Wrong view - denies that there is becoming after death (the nihilistic view) and denies the working of kamma.

The opposite states of non-covetousness, non-ill-will, and right view are wholesome mental actions.

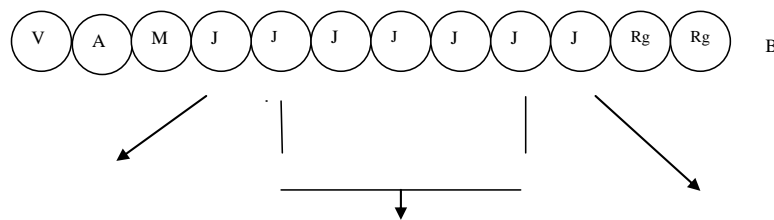
The wholesome or unwholesome javanas, generated in the five-door cognitive process, only produce their result within lifetimes (*Pavatti*), and cannot produce any mind and matter or five aggregates at the rebirth consciousness moment, because the object is still rudimentary. But the javanas, starting from the fourth mind-door cognitive process onward, are powerful enough to produce mind and matter, at the rebirth consciousness moment etc, in future lives, as well as the present life.

This is how the five-door cognitive process and mind-door cognitive processes arise and pass away, in order to apprehend the five sense objects and generate kamma. Sometimes the cognitive process occurs exclusively through the mind door, without depending on the sense doors. When any of

the six objects enters the range of cognition entirely on its own, and not as a continuation of one of the five sense-door processes, it is called a bare mind-door process (*suddha-manodvāra vīthi*). For example, when one engages in thinking, imagining or recollecting past experiences etc.

Mind-Door Cognitive Process 2

Chart 4



First javana generates

immediately effective kamma, which can only produce its effect in this very life. the

Second through sixth javana generate indefinitely effective kamma, which can produce its effect at any time along saṃsāra, until one reaches Parinibbāna.

Seventh javana generates subsequently effective kamma, which can produce its result in immediate future life.

KEY: V = vibrating bhavaṅga; A = arrest bhavaṅga; M = mind-door adverting consciousness; J = javana; Rg = registering consciousness; B = bhavaṅga.

As stated above, the seven javanas in the mind-door cognitive process are the same consciousness occurring seven times. The first javana is the weakest one, because of lack of repetition prior to it, and it generates immediately effective kamma (*diṭṭhadhammavedanīya*), which can produce its result in the present life only.

At the time of the Buddha, a daughter of a garland maker whose name was Mallikā offered all her food with great joy to the Buddha, when she saw

the Exalted One coming to obtain alms. Because of this wholesome kamma, she became the Queen of Kosala, the very same day. This kamma, which was generated by the first javana, produced its effect in this very life, in the same continuity of mind and matter. If it cannot produce its result in this very life, because of the missing necessary causes and conditions for the resultant to take place, it becomes defunct kamma (*ahosi kamma*).

The seventh or last javana is the second weakest, because the force has faded. However, with the reinforcement of repetition by the previous six javanas, this seventh javana is able to generate subsequently effective kamma (*upapajjavedanīya*), which can produce its result in the immediate future life, if it meets with the right conditions. If it cannot produce its result in the immediate future life, it becomes defunct kamma.

At the time of The Buddha, King Ajātasattu, persuaded by Devadatta, killed his father King Bimbisāra. Due to this heavy kamma, after his own death, King Ajātasattu was cast into hell. This kamma, which was generated by the seventh javana, produced his rebirth consciousness in hell, immediately after death.

At Pa Auk Forest Meditation Centre, one of the meditators traced back to the kamma he had done in his past life, to produce his present life as a human being. He saw with his insight knowledge, that in the immediate past life he was an elephant, offering lotus flower to the pagoda. At the time of his offering, many wholesome javanas in the mind-door cognitive processes, arose and passed away successively. Only one of the seventh javanas generated subsequently effective kamma, which produced his rebirth consciousness as a human being in the immediate future life, which is the present life.

The second javana up to the sixth javana are the most powerful, owing to the reinforcement of repetition by preceding javanas. They generate indefinitely effective kamma (*aparāpariyavedanīya*), which can produce its result from the second future life onward, whenever the conditions are fulfilled. It may produce the five aggregates or mind and matter at the rebirth-linking moment, in some far future lives. As long as this kamma does not give its result, its force underlies the mind and matter continuity. As long as the round of rebirths goes on, it never becomes defunct. Not even a Buddha or an Arahant is free from experiencing the result of it. It becomes defunct only at one's final Nibbāna.

For example, Venerable Moggallāna, who was the left-hand chief disciple of the Buddha and foremost in psychic power, during one of his past lives, beat his blind parents almost to death. Because of that heavy unwholesome kamma, immediately after death, he was reborn in hell and

suffered for millions of years. When he came out from hell, he was reborn as a human being for two hundred successive lifetimes, with each lifetime ended with his skull being crushed, and dying as a result.

At his last birth, when a gang of bandits approached him, he was able to escape many times using his psychic powers, but finally, due to the ripening of his past unwholesome kamma, he lost his psychic powers and was unable to escape. The bandits entered, knocked him down, and “pounded his bones until they were as small as grains of rice.” But he was not dead. He resumed his psychic powers, and appearing before the Buddha, he paid his last respect, then using his psychic power he went back to Kālasīḷa, and entered into final Nibbāna (*Parinibbāna*). Only with his Parinibbāna did his previously accumulated kamma become defunct. How fearsome and dreadful is the result of unwholesome kamma! One should try to understand and avoid committing any evil kamma, which brings about painful consequences, hard to endure.

In another story, during the Buddha’s time, a monk named Cakkhupāla became an Arahant, but afterwards became blind. Some people asked the Buddha the cause of his blindness. The Buddha told them that in a past life, this monk had been a physician. A woman asked him to restore her eyesight, promising that if he could restore it, she and her children would become his servants. His remedy restored her eyesight, but the woman, unwilling to keep her promise, told him it was getting worse. Prompted by anger, in an act of cruelty, he gave her a remedy that really blinded her. Due to that evil action, for many lifetimes, he lost his eyesight, even in his last life, after becoming an Arahant.⁵ This is how the second to the sixth javanas generate indefinitely effective kamma along saṃsāra until the attainment of one's Parinibbāna. Thus it is vital to know one's own defilements are one's own greatest enemy. Unable to subdue one's greed, anger and delusion, one commit unwholesome deeds accordingly that leave behind painful results. One becomes the true conqueror only when one conquers one's defilements.

You may wonder why an action that is performed only once, does not simply produce its effect only once, but does so even for incalculable lifetimes. This is because of the repetition and reinforcement of thousands of billions of javana moments. Each javana moment leaves behind its kammic force. Therefore, to understand the workings of kamma, it is necessary to understand the workings of the mind.

⁵ Dhammapada Commentary

As the Buddha said in the Dhammapada, “Mind is the forerunner of (all evil) states. Mind is chief; mind-made are they”. If one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, suffering follows one, even as the wheel follows the hoof of the ox. If one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows one, even as one’s shadow that never leaves.”

Due to the diversity of consciousness, a diversity of kamma and its results are experienced by beings. Bad kamma is something to be frightened of. Do not think lightly of evil; even if one performs the bad action only once, it is able to produce its effect countless times along the round of rebirths (saṃsāra). Consequently, one has to undergo painful results.

The Buddha said in the Dhammapada, “Mind delights in evil.” Just as it is natural for water to flow from mountains down to lower places, so also the mind’s tendency is to go to the evil side. If we do not want to undergo painful results, we have to try our best to prevent evil mind such as anger, craving, jealousy, conceit, avarice, selfishness, cruelty etc...from arising and cultivate more good mind such as faith, shame of wrong doing, generosity, kindness, appreciative joy, compassion, patience, tolerance, wisdom etc. Having good mental states not only enable us to abide in comfort and happiness in our lifetimes, before the cycle of birth and death comes to an end, but also to provide trust, safety, protection and love to others.

This involves Right Effort. Right Effort is fourfold, namely to prevent, discard, develop, and maintain:

Fourfold Right Effort

1) The effort to prevent the arising of unarisen evil

Unarisen evil includes killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, false speech, taking intoxicants, etc. One prevents the arising of unarisen evil by observing the five training rules, which are to abstain from the aforementioned evil actions, and by guarding the five sense doors, since evil or unprofitable thoughts enter through these five sense doors.

In *Salāyatana vagga*, in Saṃyutta Nikāya, “The Simile of the Tortoise”, advice us how to avoid evil by guarding one’s sense doors. The tortoise was searching for food along the bank of a river one evening. On that same evening, a jackal was also searching for food at the same place. When the tortoise saw the jackal in the distance searching for food, it drew its limbs and neck inside its shell and passed the time keeping still and silent. The jackal had also seen the tortoise, so he approached and waited close by, thinking, “When this

tortoise extends one or another of its limbs or its neck, I will grab it right on the spot, pull it out, and eat it.” However, the tortoise did not extend any of its limbs or its neck, the jackal, failing to gain access to it, lost interest and departed.

Defilements are constantly and continually waiting close by, to try to gain access to us, through the unguarded five sense doors. If we leave the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might invade us. How can we guard our sense doors? By fixing the mind on the meditation object either through practicing concentration meditation or insight meditation. When the mind absorbs in the object of meditation, the five sense doors are closed, and the unarisen evil will not have a chance to arise from unwise attention. Instead, wholesome consciousness will arise successively and leave behind an incalculable wholesome kammic force in the mental stream.

2) **The effort to discard evil that has already arisen**

Buddha gave five ways to remove evil thoughts that has already arisen, in Majjhima Nikāya, in the *Vitakkasanthānā Sutta*, “The Discourse on the Removal of Distracting Thoughts”:

(i) When evil, unwholesome thought connected with desire, hate, and delusion arise, one should give attention to the opposite mental state, connected with the wholesome. Such as when thoughts of sensual desire arise directed towards the opposite sex, one should meditate on foulness of the body, by contemplating on the impurity or repulsiveness of the thirty-two parts of that person's body.

The human body is made up of thirty-two parts, such as head hairs, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membrane, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, gorge, faeces, brain, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, nasal discharge, synovial fluid, and urine. As one keeps on contemplating these thirty-two parts one by one as repulsive, gradually a strong sense of repulsiveness will arise in one, and easily one will let go of clinging to the body of that opposite sex. If one continues to contemplate the repulsiveness of one's thirty-two parts, one will remove thoughts of attachment towards one's own body.

When greed arises towards inanimate objects, one can contemplate the impermanence of those objects. Even the waters of the great ocean gradually drie up, great as it is, is seen to be impermanent,

subject to destruction and change, what of these objects, last but for awhile. Thus, one removes the clinging and possessiveness to them.

When thoughts of hate arise directed towards living beings, one can replace anger with loving-kindness, by wishing them to be well and happy, free from any mental and physical suffering. Two mind moments cannot arise at the same time. When the mind is busy engaging in pervading loving kindness, anger finds no opportunity to creep in. But if this proved to be difficult to somebody who has no mastery over his mind, *Visuddhimagga*, The Path of Purification, provides many different alternatives.

As outlined in the *Visuddhimagga*, it is good to strive and make effort to subside one's resentment. If this is not possible, then the irritation may be removed by remembering some good of the person, so as to generate the confidence in him again. Everyone has some good qualities. One person may be well behaved but not with his speech and mind. Then his good quality should be remembered and the bad ones ignored. Or if one can recall the good deeds he may have done for us previously, these can soften our heart.

There may be another whose actions, speech, and mind, are not restrained. Then we should arouse compassion for that person. Though he is going about and living happily in the human world now, in a matter of time, he will find himself in misery, blamed by the public, punished by the government, and may even fall into one of the four woeful states, due to his unwholesome deeds. Compassion makes the hearts of the good person quiver, when they see others afflicted with sorrow. Irritation subsides too, through compassion.

But if one still finds thoughts of resentment arising, then one should reflect on the special qualities of the Buddha's former conduct, when he was a Bodhisatta. In the Khantivādī Birth Story, the Bodhisatta was asked by the ignorant king of Kāśī (Benares), "What do you preach, monk?" and the Bodhisatta replied, "I am a preacher of patience"; and when the king had his hands and feet cut off, he felt not the slightest anger. He remained loving and cherishing the king still, wishing him a happy, long life.

If after reflecting on the Buddha's former conduct, resentment has not subsided, one should try to consider that we are all related. As the Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, it is not easy to find a being who has not formerly been your mother . . . your father . . . your brother . . . your sister . . . your son . . . your daughter." If that is the case, how can we allow anger to reside in our hearts for those who were our relatives?

Yet, if we still fail to end the resentment, we should then try resolution into elements. How? When you are angry with someone, what is it you are angry with? The body is the combination of thirty-two parts. Is it the person's head hairs you are angry with? Or body hairs? Or bones? . . . Or is it urine you are angry with? Or alternatively, is it the earth element, you are angry with; or the water element; or the fire element; or the wind element? Or which of the five aggregates with respect to this person, you are angry with? Is it the materiality aggregate, the feeling aggregate, the perception aggregate, the formations aggregate or the consciousness aggregate? For when one tries the resolution into elements, one's anger finds no foothold, like a painting on the air.

But if one cannot practise the resolution of the elements, one should reproach oneself thus: "By getting angry you're like a man who wants to hit another and picks up a burning ember or excrement and so first burned yourself or made yourself stink. Oh! Aren't you a foolish person?"

If one still finds resentment arising, one should try the giving of a gift to show our big-heartedness and forgiveness. Forgiveness is the most tender part of the heart of a good person. This might soften his heart. And even anger that has been dogging him from a past birth subsides at the moment. Both of you might even become good friends.

Another constructive way of ending one's resentment or anger was clearly presented by Venerable Sāriputta. In his well-known discourse of *Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta*, in the Majjhima Nikāya, "The Great Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint", Venerable Sāriputta urges us to contemplate the impermanence of painful feeling when one is abused or reviled. He sees that painful feeling is dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact. Then he sees that contact is impermanent, that feeling is impermanent, that perception is impermanent, those formations are impermanent, and that consciousness is impermanent. Thus he is able to turn his painful feeling into spiritual growth. When one wins over one's defilements after a long struggle, one finds great joy and satisfaction.

(ii) If one fails using the first method and there still arise unwholesome thoughts connected with desire, hatred, and delusion, one should examine the danger in these thoughts thus: "These thoughts

are unwholesome, they are reprehensible, productive of painful results for uncountable lifetimes according to the law of kamma.”

(iii) Having thus reflected, if unwholesome thoughts still arise, one should try to forget these thoughts and should not give attention to them, just like when a person does not want to see something, they close their eyes or avert their attention to other things.

(iv) If, while trying to forget, unwholesome thoughts still arise, one should inquire into the cause of those unwholesome thoughts. As one keeps on inquiring, the flow of unwholesome thoughts slackens and eventually ceases.

(v) If after inquiring into the causes, unwholesome thoughts still arise, then with teeth clenched and the tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth, one should beat down, constrain, and crush the unwholesome mind with the wholesome mind.

The practice of the teaching of the Buddha is a battle within. Only one's own greed, anger, and delusion are one's enemy. Said by The Buddha; "whatever harm an enemy may do to his enemy, ... *a wrongly-directed mind can do far greater harm.*" If you can conquer your own greed, hatred, conceit, jealousy, stinginess, worry, delusion, and cruelty, who else can bring you harm?" One will remain unshaken in any circumstances. This is freedom of the heart.

3) **The effort to arouse unarisen wholesome states**

Unarisen wholesome states include attending to parents and elders, observing the five or eight precepts, giving and sharing what one has with others, practising meditation and so on. If one has not yet undertaken especially the threefold training in morality, concentration and wisdom, one should arouse the effort to do so, together with the understanding of the great benefit arising from them.

4) **The effort to develop and bring to perfection the wholesome states that have already arisen**

One should continue to practice with great perseverance the threefold training until one achieves Arahantship, the deathless state where all the mental corruptions are destroyed forever.

One small bad action will produce countless effects. Similarly a good action one had performed, would produce countless good effects in the future, whenever the opportunities ripen, just like a smart investor who, though investing just a small amount of money can eventually reap a fortune. One reaps what one sows. What we have reaped today reflects what we have sown in the past. If we wish our future to be full of hopes and happiness, we should diligently guard our actions in the present moment.

An excellent example is of the Bodhisatta. For many lifetimes, because of his generosity (*dāna*) and morality (*sīla*) in the past, the Bodhisatta was reborn as a wise king, a prince, or millionaire's son. He had reaped what he had sown.

At the time of the Buddha Anomadassi, human beings lived up to one hundred thousand years. There lived a poor man who offered his labour for hire. He diligently observed the five precepts with great care, for nearly one hundred thousand years without breaking them. After his death, owing to his unblemished virtue, he traversed among devas and human realms happily, up to the time of the Gotama Buddha. In all these subsequent lives, he was endowed with these three qualities: long life, handsome appearance and sharp wisdom.

At the time of the Gotama Buddha, when he was five years old, he followed his parents to the temple. Upon receiving instruction from the monk on the practice of the observance of the five precepts, he swiftly recollected the morality he had undertaken in the long past. While listening to the monk preached The Four Noble Truths, his insight knowledge became mature and he easily attained Arahantship. The kamma returns itself in a spectacular, mind-boggling, fair and soothing way.

Generosity, morality and concentration are important factors as lacking these three, would be extremely difficult for one to get the opportunity to meet the next dispensation of the Buddha. Not meeting the dispensation of the Buddha, one is devoid of the opportunity to listen to the Dhamma, which is the essential factor, for the attainment of stream-enterer. These are also the supporting factors for one to practice samatha and vipassanā meditation without much obstruction. Unless one is assured of the attainment of Arahantship in this life, one must perform generosity and keep one's morality, to ensure the conducive conditions for one's practice in the future.

Six Types of Consciousness

Although consciousness has the single characteristic of awareness of an object, it is divided into six classes.

- 1) consciousness of sight
- 2) consciousness of sound
- 3) consciousness of smell
- 4) consciousness of taste
- 5) consciousness of touch
- 6) consciousness of mental object or dhamma object

- 1) The consciousness arising dependent on the eye-sensitivity, coming into contact with a visible object, is called the consciousness of sight, and has the function of seeing. It merely sees the color but does not understand white or red etc. It also does not see the shape and form, which can only be understood by the mind-door cognitive process.
- 2) The consciousness arising dependent on the ear-sensitivity is called the consciousness of sound, and has the function of hearing. It merely hears the sound, but does not know the meaning of the sound. To understand the meaning of sound is the work of mind-door cognitive process.
- 3) The consciousness arising dependent on the nose-sensitivity is called the consciousness of smell, and has the function of smelling. It merely smells the smell, but does not know what type of smell. To know the type of smell is the work of mind-door cognitive process.
- 4) The consciousness arising dependent on the tongue-sensitivity is called the consciousness of taste, and has the function of tasting. It merely tastes the taste, but does not know whether it is bitter, sour, or sweet. To know the type of taste is the work of mind-door cognitive process.
- 5) The consciousness arising dependent on the body-sensitivity is called the consciousness of touch, and has the function of touching. It merely knows the tangible object, but cannot distinguish whether it is soft, hard, or cold, which is the work of mind-door cognitive process. Body-sensitivity is located all over the body, except at the tip of the nails, hair and dead skin.
- 6) The consciousness arising dependent on the heart-base, when coming into contact with one of the aforementioned five sense objects or mental objects,⁶ is called consciousness of mental objects. Apart from the five types of sense consciousness, all consciousness arises dependent on the

⁶ Mental objects include: 1) the five sensitive phenomena 2) 16 subtle matter 3) consciousness 4) 52 mental factors 5) Nibbāna 6) concepts like house, mountain, kasiṇa, ānāpāna nimitta, etc.

heart-base. In the immaterial plane, however, mind-consciousness arises without any base.

Thus consciousness takes six types of objects: visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects and mental objects. No consciousness will arise without taking an object.

Consciousness is not Oneself

So, consciousness arises, performs its own function, and then perishes, becoming the condition for the next consciousness to arise, all at tremendous speed. In the time it takes for one blink of the eye, thousands of billions of moments of consciousness arise and cease. It is not appropriate to rely on them, as things having substance, as well as not to regard them as the essence or substance of oneself. They are non-self (*anatta*). As preached by The Lord Buddha in The Discourse on the Characteristic of Non-Self, *Anattalakkhana Sutta*, "if consciousness were self, then this consciousness would not lead to affliction, for we could say of consciousness, let consciousness be thus, or let consciousness not be thus". It is because consciousness is not self, that it leads to affliction. The arising and ceasing of consciousness does not yield to one's wishes.

That mere carrying out of functions also should not be delusively considered a permanent self, since every ultimate reality has its own function to perform. The momentary arising and cessation of consciousness is necessarily marked by impermanence (*anicca*) - that which is born must undergo change -and this oppression by rise and fall is necessarily unsatisfactory, painful and difficult to endure (*dukkha*). That which is impermanent, painful, subject to change, can it rightly be regarded as "this is mine (bound up with craving), this is what I am (bound up with conceit), this is myself (bound up with wrong view)"? No, they cannot.

The occurrence and continuity of consciousness, depends on various causes and conditions. For example for eye-consciousness to arise, the visible object, eye-sensitivity, light, eye contact, and attention (adverting consciousness) are necessary. If the visible object does not impinge the eye-sensitivity, eye-consciousness cannot arise. If there is a visible object and eye-sensitivity, but it is dark, eye-consciousness cannot take place. Even if there is a visible object, eye-sensitivity, and light, but one does not pay attention to the visible object, eye-consciousness cannot take place.

Similarly for ear-consciousness to arise, the sound, ear-sensitivity, space, ear contact, and attention (adverting consciousness) are necessary. If the sound does not impinge the ear-sensitivity, ear-consciousness cannot arise. If there is a sound and ear-sensitivity, but if it is blocked by a wall, ear-consciousness cannot take place. Even if there is a sound, ear-sensitivity and space, but one does not pay attention to the sound, ear-consciousness cannot take place. So, besides the coming together of causes and conditions, there is nothing we could call a self or soul, who exercises control over the whole process. It is non-self, *anatta*.

Unable to break down the compactness of the continuity (*santati ghana*) of consciousness that is dependent upon causes and conditions, we think it is just one consciousness, or the same consciousness performing the act of seeing, hearing, tasting, thinking, and so on. Thus, one develops the wrong view of self.

Consciousness that arises, depending on visible object and eye sensitivity, is reckoned as eye consciousness. Consciousness that arises, depending on sound and ear sensitivity is reckoned as ear consciousness. Consciousness that arises depending on smell and nose sensitivity is reckoned as nose consciousness etc.. Eye consciousness ceases, when its conditions are removed without transmigrating to ear consciousness or nose consciousness. So too does ear consciousness ceases when the conditions for its arising cease, without transmigrating to nose consciousness or tongue consciousness. To say the same consciousness performs the act of seeing, then transmigrating to hearing, smelling, tasting is none other than wrong-view.

Consciousness cannot arise alone. It is always associated with certain mental factors. Each mental factor performs its specific function to assist consciousness in the total act of cognition. For example, the associated mental factor of feeling performs the function of enjoying or experiencing the “taste” of objects; the mental factor of perception performs the function of making a mark of objects, as a condition for subsequently recognising it as being the same. The mental factor of attention adverts or directs the mind to the object. Because we cannot break down the compactness of the function (*kiicca ghana*) of mental factors, we think it is the same ‘I’ performing the function of experiencing the object, perceiving the object, and directing or fixing on the object. Or we identify the mental factors of conceit, mindfulness, greed, anger, avarice, restlessness, etc. as ‘I’, ‘myself’, a person, a being, she, he, or as one’s

own, or as if one is the overlord of these phenomena. Thus, one wrongly develops perception of self.

Once perception of self is wrongly grasped, it establishes itself very firmly, and subsequently, the person has to exert great effort to remove this wrong view. How can one break down these two types of compactness (compactness of the continuity and compactness of function) and penetrate into their true nature as they really are? It is only through the development of wisdom based on concentration. As the Buddha said, “one who has deep concentration sees things as they really are”.

When each mind moment is examined with concentration and wisdom, one realizes that apart from the combination of consciousness and mental factors with their own special characteristics and functions, there is no substance one can grasp which can be called ‘I’ or ‘I am’. It is mere phenomena flowing. If one can see these phenomena as they really are, one’s vision is called correct vision.

At Pa-Auk Meditation Centre, meditators are taught Vipassanā meditation based on *jhāna* concentration or access concentration. At a certain stage of their practice, the mediator is able to discern the different cognitive processes and the momentary arising and passing away of each consciousness. At that moment, one breaks down the compactness of continuity. When one is able to discern the characteristic, function, manifestation, and proximate cause of consciousness and its associated mental factors, one breaks down the compactness of function. At that time the knowledge of non-self, dawns on the meditator vividly.

B) Consciousness can also be classified into four groups by way of sphere or plane:

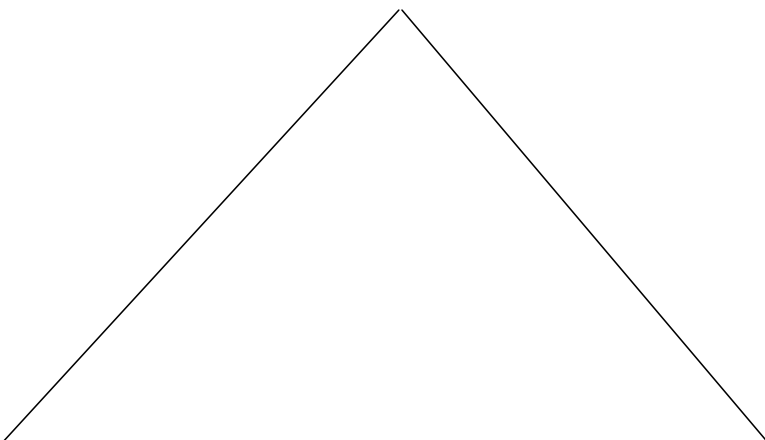
- 1) Sense-sphere consciousness (*kāmāvacaracitta*)
- 2) Fine-material-sphere consciousness (*rūpāvacaracitta*)
- 3) Immaterial-sphere consciousness (*arūpāvacaracitta*)
- 4) Supramundane consciousness (*lokuttaracitta*)

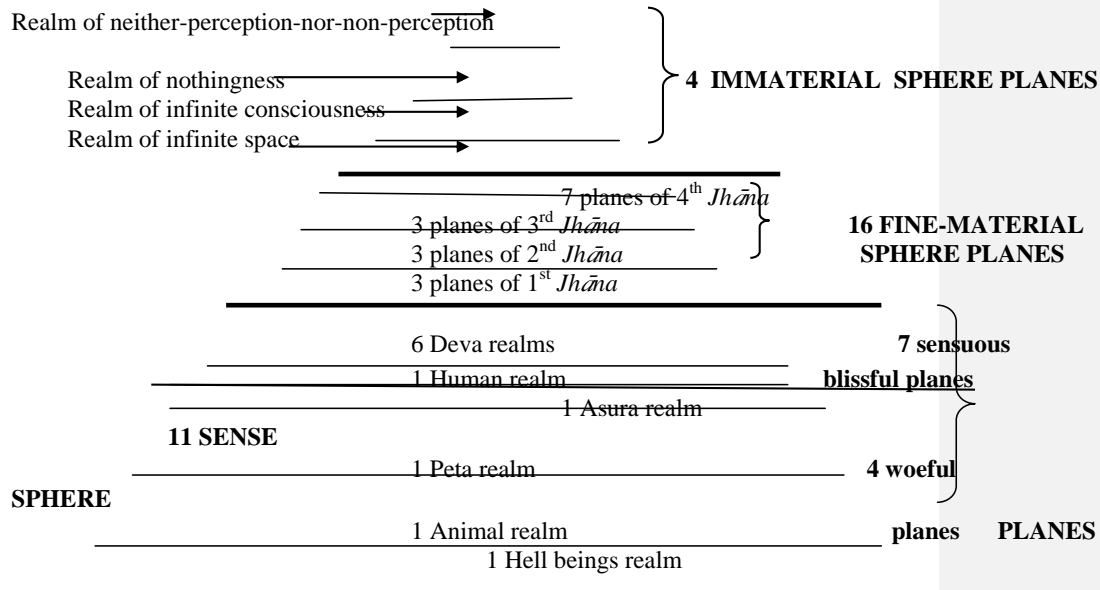
THIRTY-ONE PLANES OF EXISTENCE

5

Chart

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- 1) **Sense-Sphere Consciousness** prevails in the eleven sensuous planes (six deva realms, one human realm, four woeful realms of asura, peta, animals and hell beings). In this sphere, craving for sense pleasures such as pleasant visible objects, sound, smell, taste and tangible object predominates. These include twelve unwholesome consciousness, eight wholesome consciousness, resultant consciousness and functional consciousness.
- 2) **Fine-Material-Sphere Consciousness.** This sphere of consciousness includes all the cittas which frequent or pertain to the fine-material plane of existence (*rūpabhūmi*), the realms in which gross matter is absent and only a subtle residue of matter remains. It is absorption or *jhāna* consciousness, achieved through the development of concentration like mindfulness of breathing, ten kasiṇas⁷, the four sublime abidings

⁷ Earth, water, fire, wind, brown, red, yellow, white, light and space kasiṇas. These ten kasiṇas are the prerequisites for developing supernatural power.

(*brahmavihāra*)⁸, etc. It is free from craving for sensual pleasure; the five hindrances⁹ that obstruct mental development having been suppressed.

There are altogether fifteen types of fine-material-sphere consciousness. They are five wholesome fine-material-sphere consciousness, five resultant fine-material-sphere consciousness and five functional fine-material-sphere consciousness.

Five Wholesome Fine-Material Sphere Consciousness

The five types of wholesome fine-material-sphere consciousness are:

- (1) First *jhāna* wholesome consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (2) Second *jhāna* wholesome consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.¹⁰
- (3) Third *jhāna* wholesome consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (4) Fourth *jhāna* wholesome consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness.
- (5) Fifth *jhāna* wholesome consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

These five fine-material-sphere consciousness is distinguished by way of *jhāna* factors. The five types of wholesome fine-material-sphere consciousness may arise in the mental stream of human, devas and brahmas when they engage in *jhāna* practice. If they are able to maintain their *jhāna* up to the dying moment; as a result of their wholesome kamma, they will be reborn in one of the planes of fine-material-sphere corresponding to the *jhāna* they have attained. Thus the five types of fine-material-sphere resultant consciousness are found in the fine-material planes only, as rebirth consciousness, *bhavaṅga*, and death consciousness for Brahmas living there. Being the resultant consciousness of fine-

⁸ Loving kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity.

⁹ Sensual desire; ill-will; sloth and torpor; restlessness, remorse and doubt.

¹⁰ The first *jhāna* and second *jhāna* in Abhidamma are equal to first *jhāna* in Suttanta.

material jhāna, they cannot arise in the sense sphere planes and immaterial sphere planes.

Five Fine-Material Sphere Resultant Consciousness

The five types of fine-material-sphere resultant consciousness are:

- (1) First jhāna resultant consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
- (2) Second jhāna resultant consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness and one-pointedness.
- (3) Third jhāna resultant consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (4) Fourth jhāna resultant consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness.
- (5) Fifth jhāna resultant consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

Five Fine-Material-Sphere Functional Consciousness

The five types of fine-material-sphere functional consciousness are experienced only by Arahants who possess the five fine-material jhāna¹¹. These five functional consciousness are incapable of producing their result. They are :

- (1) First jhāna functional consciousness together with initial application, sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (2) Second jhāna functional consciousness together with sustained application, joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (3) Third jhāna functional consciousness together with joy, happiness, and one-pointedness.
- (4) Fourth jhāna functional consciousness together with happiness and one-pointedness.

¹¹ Not every Arahant possesses *Jhāna*. Some attain Arahantship through dry insight without basing on *Jhāna* (*Vipassanā-yānika*).

(5) Fifth jhāna functional consciousness together with equanimity and one-pointedness.

3) **Immaterial-Sphere Consciousness.** This sphere of consciousness comprises the citta pertaining to the four immaterial plane of existence (*arūpabhūmi*), in which matter has been totally transcended and only consciousness and mental factors remain. Rebirth into these four realms comes about through the attainment of the *arūpajjhānas*, the four immaterial absorptions, which are reached by developing concentration beyond the five jhāna of the fine-material sphere. This consciousness has become free from sense pleasures, and from the desire for the fine material planes. The meditator, having achieved the fifth jhāna with each of the kasiṇas, reflects upon the disadvantages of materiality. He reflects that the body is subject to assault with weapons and by many different kinds of diseases such as eye disease, ear disease, and heart disease. Having thus reflected, the meditator becomes dispassionate towards materiality and develops the desire for immaterial jhāna. Then he expands his kasiṇa nimitta, for example the earth kasiṇa for as long as he wishes, and then removes the kasiṇa materiality by concentrating on the space in between the kasiṇa materiality and mentally noting "space, space". Then with the disappearing of the earth kasiṇa, what remains is the space. By concentrating repeatedly on that space, he reaches the immaterial jhāna called the base of infinite space. At that time, his mental stream is occupied with the wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite space.

To proceed to the second immaterial jhāna called the base of infinite consciousness, the meditator reflects on the peaceful nature of the base of infinite consciousness. He takes as object the consciousness that was present, during the attainment of the base of infinite space, and notes it as "infinite consciousness, infinite consciousness". By repeatedly concentrating on it, he reaches the second immaterial jhāna called the base of infinite consciousness. At that time, his mental stream is occupied with the wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite consciousness.

Then he proceeds to the third immaterial jhāna called the base of nothingness. When the base of infinite jhāna consciousness is present, the base of infinite space jhāna consciousness is absent. Two moments of consciousness cannot arise in one mind-moment. Taking the absence of the base of infinite space jhāna consciousness as object, he notes it as "nothingness, nothingness". By repeated attention to that nothingness, he

reaches the third immaterial jhāna called the base of nothingness. At that time, his mental stream is occupied with the wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of nothingness.

To proceed to the fourth immaterial jhāna called the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he takes the base of nothingness consciousness as object. He concentrates on it as ‘peaceful, peaceful’. By repeated attention to that sign, he reaches the fourth immaterial jhāna called the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. At that time, his mental stream is occupied with the wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

There are altogether twelve types of immaterial-sphere consciousness: four wholesome immaterial-sphere consciousness, four resultant immaterial-sphere consciousness and four functional immaterial-sphere consciousness. They differ from the material jhāna as each of them has two jhāna factors, namely one-pointedness and equanimity.

Four Immaterial-Sphere Wholesome Consciousness

The four types of immaterial-sphere wholesome consciousness are:

- (1) Wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite space (*Ākāsānañcāyatana-kusalacitta*).
- (2) Wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite consciousness (*Viññāṇañcāyatana-kusalacitta*).
- (3) Wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of nothingness (*Ākiñcaññāyatana-kusalacitta*).
- (4) Wholesome consciousness pertaining to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*N’evasaññān’ āsaññāyatana-kusalacitta*).

These Four Immaterial-sphere wholesome consciousness arise in the mental stream of human, devas and brahmas when they engage in immaterial jhāna practice. When they are able to enter the immaterial jhāna, say the base of infinite space at their dying moment, they will be reborn in the realm of infinite space in their subsequent rebirth. Their rebirth consciousness, bhavaṅga, and death consciousness, being the result of their wholesome kamma of the immaterial jhāna, is called the resultant consciousness pertaining to the infinite space.

Four Immaterial-Sphere Resultant Consciousness

The four types of immaterial-sphere resultant consciousness arise only in the four immaterial-sphere planes, corresponding to the immaterial jhāna they have attained, prior to death in their previous life. They arise as rebirth consciousness, bhavaṅga, and death consciousness for the Brahma beings there. They are:

- (1) Resultant consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite space (*Ākāśānañcāyatana-vipākacitta*).
- (2) Resultant consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite consciousness (*Viññāṇañcāyatana-vipākacitta*).
- (3) Resultant consciousness pertaining to the base of nothingness (*Ākiñcaññāyatana-vipākacitta*).
- (4) Resultant consciousness pertaining to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*N'evasaññān' āsaññāyatana-vipākacitta*).

Four Immaterial-Sphere Functional Consciousness

The four types of immaterial-sphere functional consciousness are experienced only by Arahants who possess the four immaterial jhāna. They are:

- (1) Functional consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite space (*Ākāśānañcāyatana - kriyācitta*).
- (2) Functional consciousness pertaining to the base of infinite consciousness (*Viññāṇañcāyatana - kriyācitta*).
- (3) Functional consciousness pertaining to the base of nothingness (*Ākiñcaññāyatana - kriyācitta*).
- (4) Functional consciousness pertaining to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*N'evasaññān' āsaññāyatana - kriyācitta*).

- 4) Supramundane Consciousness** is the noble consciousness (*ariya-citta*) that has gone beyond the five aggregates of clinging. This type of consciousness leads to liberation from *saṃsāra*, the cycle of births and deaths, and to the attainment of *Nibbāna*, the cessation of suffering. It is of two kinds: the four types of wholesome Path consciousness of stream-entry, once-returning, non-returning, and Arahantship, and the four corresponding types of resultant Fruition consciousness, which are their

results. Both supramundane Path consciousness and fruition consciousness take *Nibbāna* as their object.

Conclusion

Having analyzed consciousness by way of nature, planes of existence, and the way it occurs according to cognitive processes, one comes to understand the true significance of the importance of consciousness that operates incessantly in our life.

This understanding unravels the mystery of cause and effect that lie behind our mental state (consciousness and mental factors), which effect not only our past, present, and future lives, but from every moment to moment, as long as we remain in cycle of births and deaths. This leads to the second Ultimate Reality, mental factors.

2) MENTAL FACTORS

Consciousness cannot arise alone, but must arise accompanied by or associated with mental factors, which are the second Ultimate Reality. Mental factors cannot arise segregated from consciousness. The relationship between them is association relation (*sampayutta paccayo*), according to the *Paṭṭhāna*, the method of Conditional Relations. Although both function interdependently, consciousness is to be the forerunner of the mental factors, because mental factors assist in the cognition of the object depending upon consciousness. The combination of both is called mind (*nāma*). The relationship between consciousness and mental factors is compared to a King and his ministers. When the King travels, he does not travel alone, but he always travels accompanied by ministers. Similarly, whenever a consciousness arises, it never arises alone, but always accompanied by its associations of mental factors. Although the function of consciousness is to be a forerunner of the mental factors, the characteristic of consciousness is just pure awareness of an object, it cannot by itself be good or evil. It becomes good or evil depending on the associated mental factors. Therefore, to cultivate good and avoid all evil, it is essential to study the different types of mental factors and their characteristics. Defilements arise in the form of mental factors. They arise frequently in daily life owing to unwise attention. By studying and understanding their characteristics, one should be able to tackle them when they appear and to put a stop to them through right effort. On the other hand, when beautiful mental factors such as mindfulness, non-hatred, compassion arise, recognizing them, one should develop them to a higher degree.

Like consciousness, mental factors also arise, perform their specific functions, and perish at tremendous speed with consciousness. Mental factors have four characteristics:

- 1) They must arise together with consciousness (*ekuppāda*).
- 2) They must cease together with consciousness (*ekanirodha*).
- 3) They take the same object as consciousness (*ekālambaṇa*). For example, if eye-consciousness takes a visible object then the associated mental factors also take the same visible object.
- 4) They have the same base as consciousness (*ekavatthuka*). Except for the five types of sense consciousness—eye-consciousness (*cakkhuviññāṇa*), ear-consciousness (*sotaviññāṇa*), nose-consciousness (*ghānaviññāṇa*), tongue-consciousness (*jivhāviññāṇa*), and body-consciousness (*kāyaviññāṇa*) - which arise dependent on their

respective sense sensitivities, all consciousness arises dependent upon the heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), which is situated in the blood inside the heart. The associated mental factors also arise dependent upon the same heart-base.

FIFTY-TWO MENTAL FACTORS

In Abhidhamma we have fifty-two mental factors, which can be divided into four groups:

- 1) **Seven Universals** (*sabbacittasādhāraṇa*)
- 2) **Six Occasionals** (*paṭiṇṇaka*)
- 3) **Fourteen Unwholesome Factors** (*akusalacetasika*)
- 4) **Twenty-five Beautiful Factors** (*sobhaṇacetasika*)

Seven Universals:

- 1) **Contact** (*phassa*): It touches, thus it is contact. It is not necessarily bodily contact, it can be a mental state, such as the visible object touching the eye-sensitivity, as when one sees someone eating pineapple, and saliva starts to flow in the mouth. This is also owing to contact. Contact causes the consciousness and the object to impinge. Without contact no cognitive process will occur.
- 2) **Feeling** (*vedanā*): It experiences the “taste” of the object, whether it is desirable or undesirable. The feeling that enjoys or experiences the desirable aspect of the object is called pleasant feeling (*sukha-vedanā*). The feeling that enjoys or experiences the undesirable aspect of the object is called unpleasant feeling (*dukkha-vedanā*). In some objects in which the “tastes” are neutral or not evidently good or bad, the feeling that enjoys or experiences that taste is called neutral feeling (*upekkhā-vedanā*). Apart from the mental factors of feeling, which enjoys the desirable and undesirable of objects, there is no I, he, she or a being who enjoys the taste of the objects.
- 3) **Perception** (*saññā*): It perceives the qualities of the object and makes a sign or mark as a condition to perceive again that “this is the same” or recognizing what has previously been perceived. For example, for the first time when one sees “bird,” one makes a sign that “bird” has wings and flies in the sky. So the wings and flying in the sky become conditions for recognising a bird when one sees a bird again. Perception also sometimes takes wrong to be right. Owing to distorted

perception (*saññā vipallāsa*), human beings perceive all formations to be permanent, satisfactory, and of a self, which contradicts what the Noble Ones perceive as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self. Once the phenomenon is perceived wrongly and is deeply imprinted in the mind, it becomes difficult to correct. Thus, perception, *saññā* becomes one of the factors prolonging the cycle of repeated births, *saṃsāra*.

- 4) **Volition (*cetanā*):** It wills or accumulates kamma, thus it is volition. It also organizes or urges its associated mental factors in acting upon the object. For instance, when consciousness is aware of some kind of object, its associated mental factor of volition urges contact to perform its function of causing consciousness and the object to impinge; urges perception to make a mark of it; urges feeling to enjoy or experience the taste of the object. It urges other associated mental factors to perform their respective functions thoroughly, so that they all are as if stuck to the object. The marshalling force which urges and prompts the consciousness and mental factors to be always engaged together on the object is none other than volition.

Thus, volition has a double task; it accomplishes its own function of accumulating kamma (only when it associates with wholesome consciousness and unwholesome consciousness)¹² and urges associated mental factors to do their work, just as a senior pupil who not only recites his lessons himself, but urges others to recite theirs as well.

If the volition, the will, or the inner urge is feeble, the consciousness is also feeble, and so are other mental factors. But when the volition, the will, or the urge is forceful and eager, consciousness and all other mental factors will follow suit. When consciousness and mental factors are forceful and eager, the physical body will also become alert and active. It is the function of volition to accumulate kamma and supervise all the actions of body, speech, and mind.

That is why the Buddha, assigning the responsibility to volition, said: “Bhikkhus, it is volition that I call kamma, for having willed, one performs an action through body, speech or mind.” Following this statement, note that when volition is forceful, kamma is strong; when volition is feeble, kamma is weak, as was the case with Queen Sāmāvātī and Māgandiyā.

¹² The volition which associates with resultant consciousness and functional consciousness does not motivate wholesome and unwholesome kamma.

The story of Sāmāvati showed the efficacy of volition that gave rise to result. Sāmāvati was one of the King Udena's queens who had attained the stage of stream-enterer. She has strong love for all beings and could suffuse everyone with loving-kindness and compassion. Among all the women lay disciple, she was foremost in spreading loving-kindness.

Māgandiyā, the other wife of King Udena, out of hatred to the Buddha, harboured bitterness towards Sāmāvati for being a pious disciple of Buddha, she held a bad volition to kill her. She set the whole palace of Sāmāvati on fire, in such a way that it would appear to be an accident. The whole women's palace was burnt and all the women residing in it were killed, including Sāmāvati.

Why should such a kind-hearted and faithful disciple end up with such a terrible death?¹³ The Buddha revealed that she had committed a bad deed many lifetimes ago, when she was Queen of Benares. She was bathing with her ladies-in-waiting and feeling cold afterwards, she had asked that a bush be burnt to give some warmth. However, it was too late to spot a Paccekabuddha sitting in deep concentration within the bush (the Paccekabuddha had entered into the Attainment of Cessation). This was done without the bad volition to kill therefore it was not considered an unwholesome kamma. However, the entourage did not know that he was unharmed and feared that they would be blamed for lighting the fire without due caution. To obliterate their mistake, they gathered more grass, placed it around his body, poured oil over the Paccekabuddha and set fire to burn him. They now burnt the Paccekabuddha with evil volition, and much unwholesome kamma were accumulated. Many unwholesome javanas were occurring in their mental stream that left behind painful results.

Any Non-Returner and Arahant including Paccekabuddha and Samma Sambuddha, who enters into Attainment of Cessation, cannot be killed by anyone. However the evil intention and attempted murder (which is volition or kamma) by Sāmāvati had to bear fruit, and it was in this lifetime that the result had again ripened¹.

Except those who attained the final cessation of five aggregates (*Khanda Pārinibbāna*), no one could escape from the ripening of bad volition or kamma. King Udena was greatly enraged with such atrocities and had

¹³ However She was reborn in the Deva realm.

Māgandiyā and her relatives publicly burnt, then had the earth plowed under so that all traces of the ashes were destroyed. The King had her killed with utmost cruelty. The result returned to her exactly the same as what she had done to others. This is immediate effective kamma of her bad deed, ripen in this very life. She died with intense pain and was reborn in hell for greater torture. This is subsequently effective kamma which bear its result in the immediate next life. Uncountable indefinitely effective kamma generated by the second to the sixth javanas lie dormant in her mental stream, waiting for the right conditions to ripen, for further suffering.

That is why the Buddha said that volition is kamma, for having willed, one performs an action through body, speech or mind. Therefore, when volition is forceful, kamma is strong, and when kamma is strong, the result is heavy.

- 5) **One-pointedness (*ekaggatā*):** fixes the mind on its object and is the state of collecting the mind. When consciousness is aware of an object, it is with the help of this mental factor of one-pointedness that it can be aware of the object repeatedly and for a long time. When developed, it becomes concentration and is one of the jhānic factors in all of the jhānas. It opposes distraction. It should be regarded as steadiness of the mind, like the steadiness of a lamp's flame when there is no draught. One-pointedness accompanies every consciousness, although its quality is different when it arises with different consciousness. One-pointedness that accompanies unwholesome consciousness is called "miccha-samādhi," wrong concentration. One-pointedness accompanying wholesome consciousness is called "sammā-samādhi," right concentration. Although both are the mental factor of one-pointedness, their qualities are different. There are many levels of concentration: first jhāna concentration, second jhāna concentration, and so on.
- 6) **Life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*):** It sustains the vitality of the consciousness and mental factors so that they will remain alive and endure for their full life. Otherwise, they will perish before the task of getting or knowing that object is complete. Just as lotus flowers are sustained by water, consciousness and the associated mental factors are sustained by the mental life-faculty. So, all consciousness and mental factors can function actively because of the life force of it.

- 7) **Attention (*manasikāra*):** It adverts and directs the mind to the object. It is regarded as the charioteer of associated mental states because it regulates the object. It is only because of the power of attention that one or another object is constantly present in the mind.

These seven universals must arise with all consciousness, whether it is wholesome, unwholesome, resultant, or functional. Without these seven universal mental factors, consciousness of an object would be utterly impossible.

Six Occasionals:

- 1) **Initial application of mind (*vitakka*):** It is the initial application of the mind to the object, or placing the mind on the object.
- 2) **Sustained application of mind (*vicāra*):** Sustaining application of the mind on the object by letting it examine the object again and again. After *vitakka* places the mind on the object, *vicāra* sustains it repeatedly so that it stays there for some time.
- 3) **Decision (*adhimokkha*):** It has the characteristic of conviction, a firm state of mind free from wavering, which makes a conclusion, “Just this one.” The decision determines whether to do good deeds such as giving, observing morality, listening to the Dhamma discourse, etc., or to do bad deeds such as telling what is not true, sexual misconduct, etc. It is compared to a stone pillar owing to its unshakeable resolve regarding the object.
- 4) **Energy (*vīriya*):** Energy is the state of one who is vigorous. Its characteristic is supporting, exertion, and marshalling. As an old house stands when supported by new pillars, so the aspiring meditator, when supported by energy, does not fall away from his meditation. Energy does not allow its associated states to recede or to retreat; it uplifts and supports them so that they will not collapse. Its proximate cause is a sense of urgency or grounds for the initiation of energy. Birth, old age, and death can remind us of the urgency to develop right understanding through meditation, which will eventually lead to freedom from the cycle of birth and death. When rightly initiated, energy should be regarded as the root of all achievements.
- 5) **Joy or rapture (*pīṭi*):** It is pleasurable interest of mind towards the object. It is satisfied, delighted with the object and it 'refreshes' consciousness and the associated mental factors. If a weary traveller in

the desert sees the availability of water, he will feel satisfied. Its function is to pervade or to thrill with rapture. When meditators develop deep concentration, they find the lightness of the body as if their body were lifted in the air, this is the manifestation of rapture.

- 6) **Desire (*chanda*):** It is wish, desire to act or achieve some result. It is different from greed (*lobha*), which is an unwholesome mental factor. When one wishes to realize Nibbāna, to become a great disciple, a chief disciple, a Buddha, a king, a rich man, a deva, a Brahma, a bhikkhu, or a hermit, to give charity, to observe precepts, to do good deeds, etc., all such wishes belong to the realm of desire. When desire is developed to the utmost degree, it becomes one of the four means to accomplishment (*iddhipāda*). An excellent example was when King Dhammasanda of Benaras, during the time of the Kassapa Buddha, owing to his strong desire to listen to a discourse of Kassapa Buddha, abandoned the Kingdom to roam, seeking anyone who could repeat to him a discourse, despite being only a short stanza of Dhamma.

These six occasional mental factors arise only with particular types of consciousness, not with all. For example, initial application and sustained application are excluded from third jhāna consciousness and other higher jhānas, because of their grossness. Decision is excluded from the doubting consciousness because a decision cannot be made while the mind is obstructed by doubt. Energy is excluded from the five-door advertent consciousness, the receiving consciousness, and the investigating consciousness because these consciousness are still of a relatively weak and passive nature. Joy is excluded from the fourth jhāna and other higher jhānas because of its emotion. Desire is excluded from consciousness rooted in delusion. Desire here is desire to act, to achieve a purpose, and the two consciousness rooted in delusion are so dense that they exclude purposeful action.

The seven universals and six occasionals are ethically variable factors (*aññasamanā-cetasika*), which means in wholesome consciousness they become wholesome, in unwholesome consciousness they become unwholesome; in resultant consciousness they become resultant; in functional consciousness they become functional.

Fourteen Unwholesome Factors

Four Unwholesome Universals:

- 1) **Delusion (*moha*):** Delusion has the characteristic of blindness. It is mental blindness to the true nature of the object as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self. Its function is to conceal the individual essence of an object. Unable to discern between what is wholesome and unwholesome is gross delusion.
- 2) **Shamelessness (*ahirika*):** All evil deeds are like feces. Absence of disgust at bodily and verbal misconduct is called shamelessness. Just like a village pig does not feel loathsome when eating dirty food, so a person covered by delusion does not feel shameful when doing evil deeds. When delusion arises, it leads to shamelessness; even the wise do wrong shamelessly when deluded.
- 3) **Fearlessness of wrongdoing (*anottappa*):** Fearlessness of wrongdoing is not being afraid of the consequences of committing evil deeds. Like a moth that is attracted to a flame and burns itself in the fire, a person who does not have moral dread due to delusion is attracted by evil-doing and suffers the consequences this life and in lives hereafter.
- 4) **Restlessness (*uddhacca*):** It has the characteristic of disquiet or of an unsettled state of mind, like water whipped up by the wind. The mind is unable to rest quietly on an object but flits about from object to object, like a heap of ashes that flies about when hit with a stone.

These four unwholesome universals must arise together with all twelve types of unwholesome consciousness: For every unwholesome consciousness involves a mental blindness (*moha*) to the danger in evil, a lack of shame at evil deeds (*ahirika*), for not being afraid of the consequences of evil deeds (*anottappa*), and an underlying current of restlessness (*uddhacca*).

Ten Unwholesome Occasionals:

- 1) **Greed (*lobha*):** A strong desire for an object or grasping an object and not wanting to give it up. Its function is to stick, like meat in a hot pan. Its proximate cause is seeing enjoyment in things that lead to bondage, like pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch.

The nature of greed and attachment can be illustrated by the simile of the monkey-catching glue. The glue is put on the trunks of trees in a forest. A monkey, out of curiosity at the light catching the glue at a certain angle and producing colorful patterns, touches the glue with one paw, which becomes stuck to the tree. In an effort to free his first paw, he

puts his other paw on the tree, and it also becomes stuck. And so on with his feet and finally with his head, which all become stuck to the tree. Now the monkey-catcher is able to find and catch the monkey easily. Swelling with the current of craving for sensual pleasures and existence, greed or craving should be regarded as taking beings into the cycle of birth and death.

- 2) **Wrong View (*diṭṭhi*):** It has the characteristics of unwise interpretation. It takes the wrong view that self and persons really exist. Believing in the mighty creator of the world when there is none is also wrong view. Believing everything perishes after death or denying kamma and its consequences is also wrong view. It should be regarded as the most reprehensible of all.
- 3) **Conceit (*māna*):** Conceit has the characteristic of haughtiness. It is wrongly grasping mind-and-matter as “I am” and forming ideas of superiority, equality, or inferiority according to caste, family, education, birth, etc. It is easy to have conceit when one is superior over others or equal to others. How does the inferior one develop conceit? He considers: “I live self-sufficient. Why should I show respect to others?” Though inferior to others he will still be conceited. Conceit should be regarded as madness. It is rooted in greed.
- 4) **Hatred (*dosa*):** It is aversion, resentment, irritation, annoyance and anger. It is a violent striking of the mind at an object, with the the destructive element that burns oneself and others.
- 5) **Envy (*issā*):** It is being jealous of others or lack of appreciation for others’ success and achievement. Envy easily arises when others are superior to one in beauty, education, wealth, and reputation. It is rooted in hatred.
- 6) **Avarice (*macchariya*):** It is the concealment of one’s own success and unwillingness to share with others. It also means wishing others to get nothing. It is rooted in hatred.
- 7) **Worry (*kukkucca*):** There are two kinds of remorse; anxiety or remorse over what one has done or has not done. For example, what had been done could be killing, taking what has not been given, sexual misconduct, false or harmful speech, and taking intoxicants. And what has not been done could include not taking care of one’s parents while they are alive, not practising morality when there is opportunity, not practising generosity when you can afford to give, not offering help to those in need, etc. Worry should be regarded as slavery. It is rooted in hatred. However, regret over past wrong deeds will not help oneself. Regret or remorse will not deliver you from painful consequences. If you let remorse obsessed your mind, unwholesome consciousness will arise successively and repeatedly. That

remorse will re-occur in one's mental stream during dying moments, as it happened to Queen Mallikā.

Shortly before death, Queen Mallikā, the great supporter of the Buddha, kept on remembering with remorse, a misdeed she had performed to her husband. The memory re-occurred just before her dying moment and she was cast to hell for seven days. This subsequently effective kamma is generated by the seventh javana, which produces its result in the immediate future life. Nevertheless, the unwholesome kamma was not very severe. After seven days, due to the ripening of Queen Mallikā's previous good kamma, she was able to escape from hell and was reborn in heaven.

The correct way to overcome remorse is to avoid doing evil deeds again, to make a firm resolution to refrain from akusala, evil action. If the evil deeds are not too serious, one will escape their evil results or lessen the painful consequences by virtue of one's restraint, as it happened to Aṅgulimāla. Through the outrageous demand of his previous teacher, Aṅgulimāla had killed nine hundred and ninety-nine innocent human beings. The Buddha, out of compassion for this misguided man, came to save him. Realizing his own fault, Aṅgulimāla gave up the cruelty for the going forth to be a bhikkhu and with resolution, he practised self-restrained. Since then he had never harmed any beings intentionally.

Through unrelenting effort and mature perfection, he finally achieved Arahant path and fruition knowledge. Since he had brought the end of the round of rebirths in this very life, he had escaped from the evil result in future. The subsequently effective kamma and definitely effective kamma had become defunct kamma by his attainment of Arahant path knowledge. However, he still has to face the maturing of immediately effective kamma in this present life. During his alms-rounds, he was frequently attacked with sticks and stones causing serious physical injuries with blood flowing from his head. The Buddha urged him to bear it and reminded him that it was the results of his previous deeds, or else he might have been tortured in hell for many thousands of years.

Regarding good deeds one has not done, one should not lament over it. It is never too late to mend. Do it now! Remorse is the great hindrance for meditation progress.

- 8) **Sloth (*thīna*):** This is sluggishness or dullness of consciousness towards an object. It has the characteristic of lacking driving power and the function of removing energy.

- 9) **Torpor (*middha*):** This is sluggishness or dullness of mental factors. It has the characteristic of unwieldiness and is manifested as laziness or drowsiness.
- 10) **Doubt (*vicikicchā*):** It is perplexity and indecisiveness, not believing what ought to be believed, such as the three trainings in morality, concentration, and wisdom or the Three Refuges of Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha.

The ten unwholesome occasionals arise with particular types of unwholesome consciousness, but not with all. Wrong view and conceit are found only with the consciousness rooted in greed, for they mistaken the five aggregates as 'myself', or as 'I am'. However, they cannot coexist in the same consciousness moment. Let's say, when you feel more superior in wealth and beauty, at that moment the consciousness rooted in greed, headed by conceit arise in the javana stages repeatedly. Envy, avarice, and worry are found only with the consciousness rooted in anger. But, since they exhibit different qualities and take different objects, they only arise in different cognitive processes. Envy involves resentment against the success of others; avarice involves unwillingness to share one's property with others; worry involves remorse over what one has done or not done, with anger as root. Doubt is found only in the consciousness rooted in sheer delusion.

These are fourteen unwholesome mental factors that contaminate the consciousness. Although they are small in number, they occur very often in worldlings (*Puthujjana*). In Pāli, Puthujjana means "produce a lot of defilements" (*Puthu kilese janetīi, puthujjano*), because the nature of mind is to delight in evil. This may be proven by the fact that when you read a newspaper, the news concerning crime, violence, war, rape, sexual abuse, fraud, and so on declares how often most worldlings' minds are overwhelmed with greed, hatred, and delusion. The world, owing to the unwholesome mental factors, is full of turmoil.

In our daily lives if we examine closely how time is spent, we will realize how often we indulge in sensual pleasures. Most of the people cannot live happily without the entertainment of television, music, songs, drinking alcohol, pleasant touch like sexual intercourse, etc.

Pleasant sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch induce greed and leave behind that tendency in one's mental stream. Excessive indulgence

in them will cause one to have a kind of temperament, full of greed and lust in the present life as well as the future. For certain people, when their desire and selfish motive are not fulfilled, they turn to rage and violence. When this anger is put into action and words, they in turn engage in killing, stealing, sexual abuse, lying, slandering, murdering and so on without mercy and compassion for others' suffering. Thus, people are revolving in the whirlpool of delusion, greed and hatred, which brings suffering to oneself and others.

To avoid unwholesome mental factors dominating us, we should cultivate more beautiful mental factors. There are twenty five of them.

Twenty-Five Beautiful Factors

Nineteen Beautiful Universals:

1) **Faith (*saddhā*):** It is confidence in wholesomeness, believing in what ought to be believed in: for example, kamma and its consequences, and past and future existences. A person without faith, when entering into the dispensation of the Buddha, cannot grasp the essence of the teachings. Faith has the ability to purify, like a water-clearing gem which, when put into muddy water, causes the impurities and sediments to sink and makes the water become crystal clear. So the arising of faith discards the hindrances, causes the mental corruptions to subside, purifies the mind, and makes it undisturbed.

The mind being purified, the devoted one gives gifts, observes the precepts, and cultivates the mental development of concentration and insight with clarity. Thus it is said, one with faith can set forth on the path of generosity, morality, and mental development. Its proximate cause is hearing the good Dhamma, which is necessary for the attainment of stream-entry. Nowadays, no one is able to attain stream-entry without first listening to the Dhamma or instruction on how to practise.

2) **Mindfulness (*sati*):** Mindfulness has the characteristic of not floating away from the object, like a pumpkin that is thrown into water will float away, but sinking into the object, like a stone that is thrown

into the water sinks to the bottom. This can be clearly experienced in meditation practise. For example, when you are practising Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpānasati*), mindfulness makes your mind sink deeply into the object of the breath, and not lose the object. In insight meditation, mindfulness makes your mind sink into the impermanent, suffering, non-self nature of all phenomena.

Mindfulness is also constant wakefulness in good things, like looking forward to performing generosity, which one needs to do; taking care to observe five precepts and not to breach any of them; practising samatha and vipassanā regularly; listening attentively to the Dhamma discourses, and so on.

Mindfulness is purely a wholesome mental factor; there is no wrong mindfulness like wrong concentration or wrong view. Mindfulness is also compared to a gatekeeper or guardian, which guards all the six senses so the defilements cannot enter. Mindfulness is always necessary to balance faith with wisdom, concentration with effort, and concentration with wisdom. Mindfulness is desirable under all circumstances, because it protects the mind from becoming agitated due to excess effort. It also protects the mind from falling into laziness because of excess concentration. Therefore it is necessary to have mindfulness under all circumstances, as the seasoning of salt is in all sauces. Hence, the Blessed One said, “Mindfulness is always necessary in any meditation subject.” Why is that? It is because mindfulness is a refuge and protection for the meditating mind. It is a refuge because it helps the mind arrive at special and high states it has never reached or known before. Without it, the mind is not capable of attaining any special and extraordinary states.

To one who discerns mindfulness with insight knowledge, it appears as that which protects the object of meditation not to be lost, as well as the mind of the meditator not to go to other objects. Without mindfulness a person is unable to lift up the mind or restrain the mind. That is why the Buddha has said it is useful in all instances.

- 3) **Shame (*hiri*):** Shame has the characteristic of disgust at bodily and verbal misconduct. One is ashamed of performing evil deeds, after reflecting on the worth of one’s birth, education, age, and social status. How? The one born in a good family reflects thus: “I belong to a good family. It is not fit, proper and is shameful to steal or utter untrue or harsh words.” The well-known one reflects thus: “I am well-respected by others. If I commit evil like sexual abuse, slandering, or being drunk

in public, it would be a great shame!” So they reject evil out of respect for themselves. People who has shame, recoils from evil like a cock’s feather shrinks in front of fire. Its proximate cause is self-respect.

- 4) **Fear of wrong-doing (*ottappa*):** Ottappa has the characteristic of fear or dread in doing evil after considering the painful consequences of evil deeds, such as self-blame, blame from others, punishment by the law, and suffering in the four woeful planes. How? A person reflects: “If I commit evil, I will be reproached or blamed by my parents and teachers. If my evil action is revealed, I might be put into prison.” Thus, he refrains from committing evil.

There is a simile to describe shame and fear of wrong-doing: if there is an iron rod, and one end is heated and the other is smeared with feces, one would not touch the end smeared with feces due to disgust and would not touch the heated end due to fear. The former is compared to shame, the latter to fear of wrongdoing. These two states should be regarded as the guardians of the world, as they prohibit beings from doing wrong actions. If human beings can develop these two beautiful qualities earnestly, the world will be a peaceful place to live in. These are the two of seven Noble Treasures of a stream enterer.¹⁴

- 5) **Non-greed (*alobha*):** Non-greed has the characteristic of the mind’s lack of desire for the object or non-adherence to the object, like a drop of water that runs off a lotus leaf without adhering to it, or like a man who has fallen into filth without desire for it. Non-greed includes generosity. When you are able to give away your property and your money, it shows you have no greed towards them. And it also includes renunciation, the ability to renounce worldly life, family, and the five cords of sensual pleasure and stay in solitude is a quality of renunciation based on non-greed.

- 6) **Non-hatred (*adosa*):** Non-hatred has the characteristic of lack of ferocity, like a gentle, good friend. It is manifested as agreeableness, like the full moon, liked by everybody. Loving-kindness includes forgiveness and harmlessness, which is the positive state of non-

¹⁴ Seven Noble Treasures: faith, generosity, morality, shame of wrong doing, fear of wrong doing, learning and wisdom.

hatred. The story of the novice of the Elder Tissa showed the beauty of non-hatred.

Elder Tissa ordained his attendant, a seven year old novice. He taught him to contemplate the impurities of thirty-two parts of the body. The instant the razor touched his hair, the boy attained Arahatsip.

In one of the journeys, after three days the novice had occupied the same lodging with his preceptor. He was mindful not to allow his preceptor to commit the offence of sleeping in common,¹⁵ hence he sat up the whole night, unknown to the Elder. The Elder, being concerned about the same offence, threw a fan at the novice to get him out of the room. The handle of the fan struck the novice in the eye and straightaway put out his eye. This novice wished to spare his preceptor's remorse, did not tell him the real facts, and covering his eye with one hand, he faithfully continued his duties for his preceptor. It was only later that the Elder discovered what had happened and was deeply moved. He bowed to the seven-year old novice and asked for forgiveness. The novice consoled him and said, "You are not to be blamed in this matter and neither am I. The round of existences alone is to be blamed for this."

With great remorse the Elder related the whole situation to the Buddha. The novice even comforted his preceptor, cherished neither hatred nor anger towards him. The Buddha said, "Monks, those who have rid themselves of the Taints cherish neither anger nor hatred towards anyone. On the contrary, their senses are in a state of calm and their thoughts are in a state of calm."

7) **Neutrality of mind (*tatramajjhataṭṭā*):** It is keeping in the middle of all things. The mental attitude of balance and impartiality, that neither clings to an object, nor rejects it. When developed, neutrality of mind becomes equanimity, one of the four sublime abidings. And this equanimity towards all beings comes from the understanding that all beings have kamma as their heritage. One must develop loving-kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy before developing equanimity. It is attained in the fifth jhāna. Its' near-enemy is indifference from lack of understanding.

¹⁵ The fifth offence of expiation: "Should any bhikkhu sleep for more than two or three nights along with one not fully ordained (as a bhikkhu) this entails expiation."

The following twelve mental factors are grouped into six pairs. Of each pair, one pertains to mental factors and the other pertains to consciousness.

8) **Tranquillity of mental body** (*kāyapassaddhi*)

9) **Tranquillity of consciousness** (*cittapassaddhi*)

The composure of consciousness and the mental factors, in that they are at rest and become cool. It is opposed to the defilements of restlessness and worry, which create annoyance.

10) **Lightness of mental body** (*kāyalahutā*):

11) **Lightness of consciousness** (*cittalahutā*)

Lightness of mental body and lightness of consciousness block out the heaviness in consciousness and the mental factors that are caused by sloth and torpor.

12) **Malleability of mental body** (*kāyamudutā*)

13) **Malleability of consciousness** (*cittamudutā*)

Malleability of mental body and malleability of consciousness are the pliancy of mind that overcomes the rigidity of consciousness and the mental factors caused by defilements such as wrong view and conceit.

14) **Wieldiness of mental body** (*kāyakammaññatā*)

15) **Wieldiness of consciousness** (*cittakammaññatā*)

Wieldiness of mental body and wieldiness of consciousness are the adaptability of consciousness and the mental factors in carrying out their beneficial work. It's compared to heated gold, which is made fit for any use.

16) **Proficiency of mental body** (*kāyapāguññatā*)

17) **Proficiency of consciousness** (*cittapāguññatā*)

Proficiency of mental body and proficiency of consciousness are the skillfulness and healthiness of consciousness and the mental factors. They suppress the sickness of mind caused by the passions and lack of faith.

18) **Rectitude of mental body** (*kāyujukatā*)

19) **Rectitude of consciousness** (*cittujukatā*)

Rectitude of mental body and rectitude of consciousness are the strictness and uprightness of consciousness with the mental factors that opposes crookedness, deception and hypocrisy, etc.

These nineteen Beautiful Universals arise together with all wholesome consciousness. For instance, when one performs generosity, keeps morality, or practices samatha or vipassanā meditation, listening to the dhamma, sharing merits with other, serving the parents or elders, teaching dhamma.

Three Abstinenes:

- 1) **Right speech (*sammāvācā*):** Abstaining from the fourfold wrong speech - false speech, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk, even though one has a chance to commit them.
- 2) **Right action (*sammākammanta*):** Abstaining from the threefold wrong action - killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct, even though you have a chance to commit them.
- 3) **Right livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*):** Abstaining from the fivefold wrong trading - selling poisons, intoxicants, weapons, slaves, or animals for slaughter. Property or wealth gained by the aforementioned four types of wrong speech and three wrong actions are also considered wrong livelihood.

The three abstinences associated with wholesome sense sphere consciousness arise separately only on the occasion when one intentionally refrains from wrong speech, action, or livelihood, for which an opportunity has arisen. For example, when one is quick to utter harsh speech after being prompted, he refrains and abstains from it because of the shame and fear of wrongdoing. At that moment, among the three abstinence only mental factor of right speech arises. The same applies to right action; when you meet with the opportunity to take life. For instance, wanting to kill the mosquito which is now sucking your blood, but you abstain from it, fearing the consequences of killing.

But in supramundane consciousness, like path consciousness, these three abstinences necessarily arise together as the three factors in the morality group of the Noble Eightfold Path, functioning to eliminate permanently the evils, associated with wrong speech, action, and livelihood.

Two Illimitables:

- 1) **Compassion (*karuṇā*):** The wish to remove or to alleviate the suffering of others or being unable to bear others' suffering. *Karuṇā* is defined as: "The quality which makes the heart of the good man tremble and quiver at the suffering of others." When seeing others in misery, the wish to help them and alleviate their pain is aroused in one who is compassionate. He strives and actually renders the help to remove their suffering. But, if he fails, he does not give in to sadness, understanding that all beings are the owners of their kamma, and have kamma as their heritage. It is this great compassion, being unable to

see all beings drowning in aging, sickness, death and suffering incessantly in the four woeful states, that spurred on the hermit Sumedha (the Bodhisatta) to boldly give up his attainment of Arahantship in that life. Instead, he strived strenuously for four asaṅkheyya and hundred thousand kappas to become the Supremely Enlightened One, in order to show the path to all beings, who are floating in the ocean of birth and death endlessly.

- 2) **Appreciative Joy (*muditā*)**: This means rejoicing or delighting in others' success, achievement and prosperity. They applaud the success of other people with sincerity and with the thought: "May this being, be not separated from the prosperity he has attained."

These two are called illimitables because they are to be developed towards all living beings without limit. The other two Divine Abodes (Brahma Vihāra), loving-kindness and equanimity, come under the mental factors of non-hatred and neutrality of mind, respectively. Compassion and appreciative joy will only arise separately from each other and only when the condition for them to arise is fulfilled, because they each take a different object: compassion takes the suffering of others while appreciative joy takes others' success.

One Non-delusion:

- 1) **Wisdom faculty (*amoha*)**: Wisdom has the characteristic of penetrating into things as they really are as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self. It removes ignorance, which covers the Four Noble Truths. It is manifested as non-bewilderment, like a guide in the forest. Wisdom is necessary for understanding kamma and its results; understanding the scriptures or Dhamma sermons; and for the attainment of jhāna, path and fruition. It is also called insight (*paññā*), knowledge (*vijjā*), and right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*).

There are many kinds and degrees of wisdom. There can be wisdom which knows the benefit of wholesomeness and the disadvantages of unwholesomeness; there is wisdom which stems from contemplation on the shortness of life, and so on. These kinds of wisdom can arise even when one has not listened to the Dhamma. When one has studied the Dhamma, there is intellectual understanding about ultimate mind, matter, and their causes, i.e., the activity of the law of kamma and its results. When wisdom develops further through the development of meditation, there is direct understanding of

ultimate mind, matter, Dependent Origination, to the extent of realizing Nibbāna.

Seeing phenomenon (*dhammas*) as they really are is the goal of the Buddha's teachings. Developed wisdom knows what is real in the ultimate sense and what is not real. So long as there is wrong view, we cannot see the ultimate realities of mind and body as they really are.

Wisdom is one of the spiritual faculties (*indriyas*), which has to be developed together with the other spiritual faculties of confidence or faith (*saddha*), energy (*viriya*), mindfulness (*sati*), and concentration (*samādhi*). Through the equal development of these five faculties, the Four Noble Truths will be realized.

Wisdom's proximate cause is concentration, because the Buddha says, "One who has concentration, knows and sees the dhammas as they really are".

These are all the fifty-two mental factors. They arise in a certain group with appropriate state of consciousness.

Unravel the Mysteries of Mental Factors

Mental factors when accompanying with consciousness, assist consciousness perform more specific tasks in the total act of cognition.

A practical example will make this clear. When you are eating, how does consciousness work and how do the mental factors help the consciousness in the whole process of eating or drinking wine? At that moment, consciousness is just aware of the taste, that's all. Pure awareness of the taste is the characteristic of consciousness.

The mental factor of contact performs the function of causing the consciousness and taste to impinge; without contact, consciousness of an object would be impossible. The mental factor of feeling experiences the taste, enjoys the desirable aspect of the taste. Apart from the mental factor of feeling, there is no self who experiences it. The mental factor of perception

performs the function of making a sign or a mark as a condition for perceiving it again: “This is the same sweet taste, this is the same sweet taste, etc.” And the mental factor of volition performs the function of organizing or urging all the associated mental factors, to act upon that taste, and it itself generates kamma rooted in greed. The mental factor of one-pointedness fixes all the mental factors towards the taste. The mental factor of life-faculty sustains the vitality of associated mental factors so that they will remain alive and endure until they finish the task. And the mental factor of attention directs the mind to the taste, adverting to the taste. This is how the seven universal mental factors (*cetasikas*) assist consciousness in the total act of cognition.

The six occasional mental factors also act to assist consciousness. The mental factor of initial application of mind acts to place the associated mental factors onto the taste; mental factor of sustained application of mind sustains the associated mental factors on the taste by letting it examine the taste again and again; the mental factor of decision decides, “Good sweet taste etc.”; the mental factor of energy supports the associated mental factors so they will not collapse or retreat, especially helping greed to arise; mental factor of joy keeps a joyful interest in the taste; and the mental factor of desire is the desire to get the taste, or to let greed arise.

Then there are the four unwholesome universal mental factors, which arise with every unwholesome consciousness. The mental factor of delusion conceals the true nature of the taste, which is impermanent, unsatisfactory, and impure in nature, instead of seeing the taste as permanent, satisfactory and pure. The mental factor of shamelessness is the lack of shame for the arising of greed while enjoying the taste. The mental factor of fearlessness of wrongdoing means, not being afraid of the consequences of the arising of greed, while enjoying the taste. The mental factor of restlessness makes the mind disquiet and distracted, not composed while enjoying the taste.

Then we have the unwholesome occasional mental factors, which arise only with certain types of unwholesome consciousness. In this case there is mental factor of greed, which keeps enjoying the taste, grasping onto the taste, not wanting to give up. The mental factor of wrong view, interprets wrongly that food really exists in the ultimate sense.

In all, there are nineteen mental factors plus one unwholesome consciousness rooted in greed during the process of enjoying the food or drinking wine. Each consciousness and mental factors arises, performs its specific function and vanishes at tremendous speed. This process occurs successively at unwholesome javana stage. As you already know,

unwholesome kamma is being performed, and reinforced by the repeated unwholesome javana processes. On the other hand, sometimes you cannot get your favorite taste that you are attached to, and due to unfulfilled desire or greed, agitation or anger arises in you. At that time, one consciousness rooted in anger, associated with seventeen mental factors,¹⁶ arises successively in your mental stream at the javana stages, leaving behind unwholesome kammic potency, which will produce its bad result when matured. Be aware!

On the other hand, if one engages in any wholesome deeds such as charity, thirty-three mental factors will arise at one's javana stages. They are the seven universals which must arise with every consciousness; six occasionals if one does it with joy, if not, joy will be excluded; nineteen beautiful universals which arise with all wholesome consciousness and lastly, the wisdom faculty provided one performs it with the understanding of kamma. Many wholesome kammass are being accumulated.

Mental Factors are not 'Self'

Having analyzed each associated mental factor and the specific function they perform, one comes to the realization there is no overlord 'I' who exercise control over any process either of eating or performing charity. The wrong view of 'I' or 'being' comes through as not able to break down the compactness of the functions of mental factors. Therefore one mistakenly considers the feeling aggregate as 'I'; perception aggregate as 'I'; formation aggregate as 'I'; and consciousness aggregate as 'I'. They say, "I enjoy the taste"; "I am a generous person". Thus the wrong view of 'I' or 'being' comes about.

Consciousness is like a car body. The mental factors are like the associated gear shift, gas, and steering in the car, which perform their specific functions in order to help the car move forward. Similarly, the mental factors help the consciousness in the total act of cognition, either in experiencing the taste, seeing the visible object, hearing the sound,

¹⁶ Excluding the mental factors of greed, wrong view, and joy, which only arise with consciousness rooted in greed. Greed and hatred, according to the Abhidhamma, are mutually exclusive: they cannot coexist within the same consciousness. So also wrong view cannot arise simultaneously with hatred in the same consciousness, but can arise at an earlier time in a different type of consciousness. Consciousness rooted in anger is necessarily accompanied by displeasure, not joy.

smelling the smell, sensing the tangible object, or experiencing the mental object. Without the help of mental factors, consciousness cannot experience the object fully, and the whole cognitive process cannot take place.


Consciousness can be compared to pure water, and the mental factors can be compared to different dyes. When you put yellow dye in pure water, it becomes yellow; if you put black dye into pure water it becomes black. Mental factors seduce the mind to become good or bad. The study of mental factors helps us to understand how the mind reacts when it comes to contact with any six sense objects, which is important to avoid what is harmful and cultivate what is beneficial to us.

The functions that mental factors performed should not be wrongly considered as a permanent self or soul. Hence, mental factors are not 'self'.

3) MATTER (RŪPA)

Matter, or materiality, the third ultimate reality, forms this so-called body. There are twenty-eight kinds of materiality, called *rūpa* in Pāli. Four are primary materiality of earth, water, fire and wind. The remaining twenty-four are materialities derived from them. Matter does not arise singly, but in a group called *rūpa-kalāpa* or sub-atomic particles. One *rūpa-kalāpa* consists of a minimum of eight materialities of earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence known as pure octad *kalāpa*.

Pure Octad Kalapa

- 
- Earth element
 - Water
 - Fire
 - Wind
 - Colour
 - Smell
 - Taste
 - Nutritive Essence

These eight are inseparable. All the materialities in a group arise together and cease together. Their occurrence depends on the four primary materialities. So they have the same common base.

Why is materiality, the third ultimate reality, called *rūpa* in Pāli? The Pāli word for *rūpa* is derived from the verb *ruppati* which means “to be deformed, disturbed, oppressed and broken”. The Buddha himself explained that it is deformed (*ruppati*) and therefore it is called material form. Deformed by what? Deformed by cold, by heat, by hunger, by thirst, by flies, mosquitoes, wind, sunburn, and creeping things. For instance, in a cold climate, skin cracks; in a hot climate because of excessive fire elements in each *kalāpa*, skin gets inflamed and reddened; in hunger because of weakness of nutritive essence in each *kalāpa*, the body becomes weak and fatigued. But this is merely the manifestation of conventional truth.

The four primary materialities or also known as the four great elements (*mahābhūta*) of earth element, water element, fire element, and wind element are the primary material elements. These are the fundamental constituents of matter, which exist together. Every material substance, ranging from the smallest particles in our body to the most immense objects such as mountains and the sea, is made up of these four elements. They are called elements (*dhatu*) in the sense that they bear their own intrinsic natures. These can easily be discerned by meditators who practice four elements meditation. They discern the intrinsic nature each element bears. Earth element bears the intrinsic nature of hardness and roughness. Water element bears the intrinsic nature of flowing and cohesion. Fire element bears the intrinsic nature of heat and cold and wind element bears the intrinsic nature of motion and supporting. So the experience of four elements is not simply the earth, water, fire and wind as we know them, in conventional truth.

Why is it so important to understand materiality? In the '*Mahagopalaka Sutta*', the 'Great Cowherd Sutta', The Buddha explains the knowledge of materiality that is necessary for a bhikkhu to progress in the Dhamma and Vinaya:

How does a bhikkhu have knowledge of materiality? Here a bhikkhu understands as it really is: 'All materiality of whatever kind consists of the four great elements and materiality derived from the four great elements. That is how a bhikkhu has knowledge of materiality.'

And The Buddha says that without this knowledge, the bhikkhu is incapable of growth, increase, and fulfilment in this Dhamma and Vinaya. This means we need to know and see all twenty-eight types of materiality: primary materiality and twenty-four derived materialities.

Four Great Elements

There are four great elements: earth element; water element; fire element and wind element.

Earth element: The earth element is so called because, like the earth, it serves as a support or foundation for the coexistent material phenomena. This is the element of extension. It is due to this element of extension that objects occupy space. The main characteristic of earth element is hardness, but it also includes roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness and lightness. Whatever

there is internally in oneself that is hard, harsh, soft, and clung to (acquired through kamma) such as head hair, teeth, nails, bones, heart, spleen, bowels, etc., has earth element as predominant factor.

Water element: This is the element of cohesion that makes different matter within one kalāpa cohere or hold together, preventing them from being scattered. The water element binds the other three elements of earth, wind and fire so that they can stand together and depend on one another. When water element which holds them together disappears, the other three elements also disappear instantaneously. Our limbs and organs are held together in proper position due to this element of cohesion. Materiality can exist in this world in various forms, sizes and dimension ranging from the tiniest atom to Mount Meru, on account of this water element. When cohesion in Mount Meru is removed, Mount Meru will disappear instantaneously. Why? Due to the non cohesion to hold them together, the elements of earth, fire and wind, which are in Mount Meru, are unable to support one another and hence will disintegrate.

Water element also has the characteristic of flowing. When water element is less, it coheres; when it is excessive, it flows. This can be tested by pouring a little water into flour. When water is less, the flour coheres. If more water is added, the flour flows.

Whatever is internal in oneself that is water, watery, and clung to, like blood, pus, urine, grease, tears, sweat, fat, etc., has water element as predominant factor.

Fire element: This is the element of heat that matures, ripens, and ages other material phenomena. The liveliness of all beings and plants is preserved by this fire element. It also has the characteristic of cold. But heat and cold are relative. When you touch water and feel warmth, it is fire element. When it is not that warm, it is cold, it is also fire element.

Fire element is manifested as a continuous supply of softness. Just like an iron bar becomes soft when continuously heated up by fire. The fruits continuously turn to softness after ripening. These are merely manifestations of fire element.

Whatever is internal in one's body that is fire, fiery, and clung to and which causes what is eaten, drunk, chewed, and tasted to get completely digested in our stomach, is called the internal fire element. The body also grows old, wrinkles, weakens, gets grey hair, etc., due to the fire element.

There are four components of the body in which fire element is predominant, namely heat that warms the body, heat that causes maturing and

aging, heat of fever and digestive heat. We have indigestion because of weak digestive fire. The worried person ages faster because of excessive fire element. In our bodies, if fire element is moderate, we are healthy; if not, we are sick, and if it is in excess, we die.

Wind element: This is the element of motion and distension that causes material phenomena to move from one place to another. It has the characteristic of distension and supporting. It is manifested as conveyance to other places. We are able to sit erect because of the supporting, which is characteristic of the wind element. Wind element is experienced as tangible pressure.

In our body there are six types of wind:

- i) Wind that moves upwards, causing belching, coughes, sneezing and related illness. When we speak, this wind moves constantly upward and may cause bowel discomfort.
- ii) Wind that moves downwards, causing bowel movement and frequent motion.
- iii) Wind that moves about in the visceral cavity, apart from the large and small intestines.
- iv) Wind that moves about inside the large and small intestines. The wind which is in the intestines, push down the food that is eaten and whatever is eaten has to go through the rectum.
- v) Wind that moves within the limbs. If this wind does not move freely, illness such as stroke results. In our bodies there are small veins along which this wind moves.
- vi) Wind inhaled and exhaled by us.

If these four elements are well balance, the body is in good shape, if not, we are sick. To keep the four elements in balance, depend on our mood and emotion, suitable climate, healthy food and also the past kamma we had performed.

The Twenty-Eight Kinds of Matter

Chart

6

Four Great Elements

1. Earth element
2. Water element
3. Fire element
4. Wind element

Dependent on these four
elements,
twenty-four materialities are
, . . . ,

Concretely Produced Matter (18)
(including the Four Elements)

Non-Concrete Matter (10)
(these are the mode or attribute of
the 18 concretely produced matter)

Sensitive Phenomena

- 5. Eye-sensitivity
- 6. Ear-sensitivity
- 7. Nose-sensitivity
- 8. Tongue-sensitivity
- 9. Body-sensitivity

Objective Phenomena

- 10. Visible object
 - 11. Sound
 - 12. Smell
 - 13. Taste
- (tangible objects are the 3 elements of earth, fire, and air)

Sexual Phenomena

- 14. Femininity
- 15. Masculinity

Heart Phenomenon

- 16. Heart-base

Life Phenomenon

- 17. Life-faculty

Nutritional Phenomenon

- 18. Nutriment

Limiting Phenomenon

- 19. Space element

Communicating Phenomenon

- 20. Bodily intimation
- 21. Verbal intimation

Mutable Phenomena

- 22. Lightness
 - 23. Malleability
 - 24. Weldiness
- (plus two intimations)

Characteristics of Matter

- 25. Production
- 26. Continuity
- 27. Decay
- 28. Impermanence

Eighteen Concretely Produced Matter

They are called concretely produced matter because they possess intrinsic nature, suitable for contemplation by insight. These are divided into seven classes.

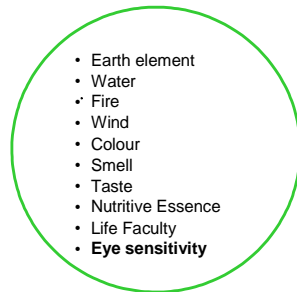
1) **Four Great Elements** (as discussed above)

2) **Five Sensitive Phenomena**

There are five sensitive parts of the sense organs, produced by past kamma in the body, which can receive the corresponding sense object. They are eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, and body-sensitivity.

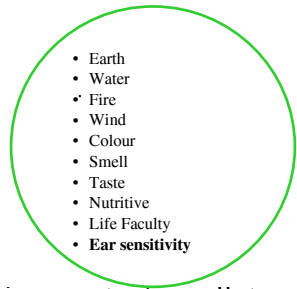
2.1 Eye-sensitivity takes visible object or colour as object. It is the sensitive substance in the retina that registers colour or light. It serves as physical base for eye-consciousness. The impingement of colour to eye sensitivity gives rise to eye consciousness. Eye-sensitivity is to be found in eye-decad kalāpa.

EyeDecad kalāpa



2.2 Ear-sensitivity takes sound as object. Ear sensitivity is the sensitive substance found inside the ear hole that registers sound. It serves as physical base for ear consciousness. The impingement of sound to ear sensitivity gives rise to ear consciousness. Ear-sensitivity is to be found in ear-decad kalāpa.

Ear Decad Kalapa



2.3 N
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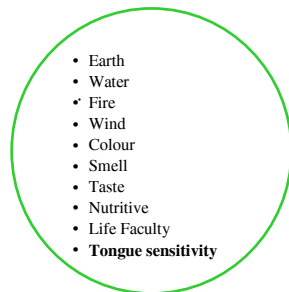
ct. Nose sensitivity is the nose that registers smell. It registers nose consciousness. The impingement of smell to nose sensitivity gives rise to nose consciousness. Nose-sensitivity is to be found in nose-decad kalāpa

Nose Decad Kalapa



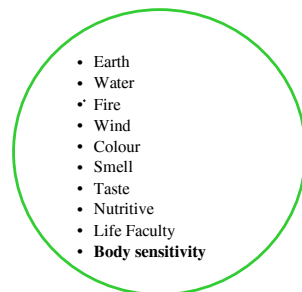
2.4 Tongue-sensitivity takes taste as object. Tongue consciousness is the sensitive substance found diffused over the tongue that registers taste. It serves as physical base for tongue consciousness. The impingement of taste to tongue sensitivity gives rise to tongue consciousness. Tongue-sensitivity is to be found in tongue-decad kalāpa.

Tongue Decad Kalapa



2.5 Body-sensitivity takes the tangible objects (earth, fire and air element) as object. The body sensitivity extends all over the body that is sensitive to touch or tangible objects. One experiences softness, hardness, heaviness, lightness, roughness, smoothness, warmth, cold, pressure, supporting etc., owing to body sensitivity. It serves as physical base for body consciousness. The impingement of tangible object to body sensitivity gives rise to body consciousness. Body-sensitivity is to be found in body-decad kalāpa all over the body.

Body Decad Kalapa



These five sensitive phenomena exist because of craving for pleasant and agreeable visible objects, sound, smell, taste and tangible objects. The five types of sense consciousness arise dependent on these five sensitivities, respectively. Their relation is the relation of dependence (*nissaya paccayo*). When various colours and lights impinge eye-sensitivity, the consciousness called eye-consciousness, which sees that visible object, arises and vanishes. This gives rise to eye door cognitive process, followed by many mind door cognitive processes in order to apprehend the visible object clearly, and similarly for the ear, nose, tongue and body sensitivities.

3) **Five Objective Phenomena**

There are five objective phenomena, namely visible object (color), sound, smell, taste, and tangible object (touch). Tangible objects are the three elements of earth, fire, and wind. They can be felt as heat, cold, hard, soft, pressure, vibrations and supporting. Water element is excluded since it cannot be felt by the sense of touch. These five sense objects have the characteristic of impingement on the sensitive base of eye, ear, nose tongue and body. They serve as the objects of the five types of sense consciousness.

One should not think that these five objective phenomena exist externally only, they can be found inside the body as well. For instance, when a meditator discern the four elements on his newly eaten food in stomach, he can see the stomach break into numerous kalāpas, when he discerns the taste in a group of kalāpa, the sour or bitter taste appear in his insight. Similarly, when he discerns smell, he might find the smell foul!

4) **Sexual Phenomena**

There are two sexual phenomena, namely femininity and masculinity. Only one of the sexual phenomena exists in each sex-materiality decad-kalāpa. The femininity faculty has the characteristic

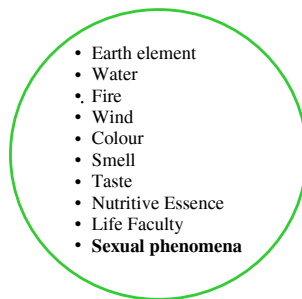
of the female sex. It is manifested through the mark, sign, deportment, body structure, voice, etc., of the female by which we know: “this is a female”, and it is found only in females. Females' deportment is soft, gentle and their voice is sweet and light.

The masculinity faculty has the characteristic of the male sex. It is manifested through the mark, sign, deportment, body structure, voice, etc., of the male by which we know, “this is a male”. It is found only in males. Males' deportment and voice is more rough and rugged.

For the 'female' hermaphrodite, when she develops attachment to female, her femininity is hidden and her masculinity becomes predominant. Similarly the 'male' hermaphrodite develops interest in a male, his masculinity is hidden and his femininity becomes predominant.

The eight inseparable elements, life faculty and sexual phenomena form a sex-materiality decad-kalāpa. They are found pervading the whole body, from head to toes.

Sex-materiality Decad Kalapa



5) **Heart Phenomenon (Heart-Base)**

The eight inseparable kalāpa, life faculty and heart-base form a heart-base decad-kalāpa. Billions of heart-base decad-kalāpas are found in the blood inside the heart, and are the support for all consciousness, including bhavaṅga consciousness, with the exception of the five types of sense consciousness. Each consciousness arises dependent on only one heart-base in each heart-base decad-kalāpa. Their relation is the relation of dependence (*nissaya paccayo*). The

eight inseparable elements, life faculty and heart-base form a heart-base decad-kalāpa.

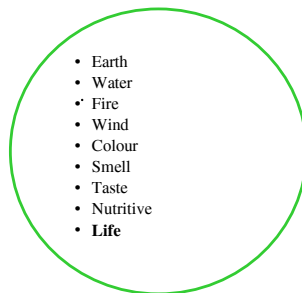
Heart Base Decad Kalapa



6) **Life Phenomenon (Life-Faculty)**

The eight separable elements and life faculty form a life nonad-kalāpa. Just as there is a vital force in mental factors, so there is a vital material force called life-faculty among the matter (life-force), giving life to a being. The life-faculty has a protective function, like the water in the pond that prevents the lotus from withering. Thus, the life-faculty maintains the life of conascent kinds of matter at the static moment. It is itself being produced and dying from moment to moment, maintaining the life of conascent matter in its own kalāpa only. Life-faculty element maintains only kamma-produced materiality such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, sex and heart-base decad kalāpa. Without life-faculty, the body becomes a corpse.

Life Nonad Kalapa



7) **Nutritional Phenomena (Nutritive essence):**

Nutritive essence exists in every kalāpa which forms the basic eight inseparable elements, or pure octad-kalāpa, (earth, water, fire, and wind elements, colour, smell, taste and nutritive essence). Nutritive essence (*ojā*) is the nutritional substance contained in edible food that helps the growth of new rūpas in the body. The nutritive essence in each kalāpa, having been supported by digestive fire, multiplies forth again and again, and is thus easily recognised by meditators.

The five sensitive phenomena, the sexual phenomena, the heart-base phenomenon, and the life-faculty phenomenon are exclusively originated by kamma performed in previous lives. Thus, if your eyes or nose are not properly shaped, it is your past bad kammās which are responsible, similarly, the fact of being a man or a woman in your present life.

These eighteen concretely produced matter are grouped together as:

- i. Matter possessing intrinsic nature (*sabhāvarūpa*), such as heat in the case of fire element, hardness in the case of earth element, and so on;
- ii. Matter possessing general characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self (*salakkhaṇarūpa*). Every rūpa arises and ceases at tremendous speed. Hence it is impermanence; oppressed by constant arising and ceasing is suffering; there is no substantiality in it, hence it is non-self.
- iii. Concretely produced matter because they are directly produced by conditions such as kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment (*nippannarūpa*);
- iv. Matter matter, because they undergo change or alteration (*rūparūpa*);
- v. Matter to be comprehended by insight, by way of the three characteristics (*sammasanarūpa*).

Ten Non-Concretely Produced Matter

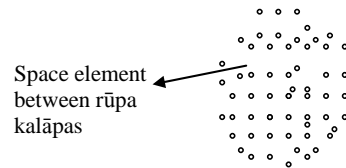
The remaining ten matters are called non-concretely produced matter because they do not arise directly from the four main causes of matter but are merely modes and attributes of concretely produced matter. Therefore they

are not considered ultimate realities and are not the object of vipassanā. They are divided into four classes.

1) Limiting Phenomenon (Space Element):

There is space that delimits or separates rūpa kalāpas. Just like when eggs are put together, there is space in between them, and similarly there is space in between rūpa kalāpas that delimits them, enabling us to distinguish one rūpa kalāpa from another.

RŪPA KALĀPAS IN THE BODY



2) Two Intimating Material Phenomena

There are two intimating material phenomena: bodily intimation and verbal intimation.

- i. Bodily intimation. It is through bodily movement like nodding the head, bending the body, moving the hand, going forward and backward, one reveals one's intention to others. For instance, when you want to come close to someone, with that intention in mind, many rūpa kalāpas called matter-produced-by-consciousness are produced, and they pervade all over the body. The wind element in each kalāpa of consciousness-born matter arises together successively, causing matter to move from one place to another. Thus, the body moves forward and the intentions are revealed.
- ii. Verbal intimation. When one has the intention to speak, many consciousness-born matter arise depend on the heart-base and pervade all over the body. The earth element in the consciousness-born matter when reaching the throat, collide with earth element born by kamma that causes the occurrence of speech, thus ones' verbal intentions are revealed.¹⁷

¹⁷ Please refer below to the section on matter-produced-by-consciousness for further explanation.

3) Three Mutable Phenomena

There are three mutable phenomena: lightness, malleability, and wieldiness.

Lightness prevents any disturbance that would create heaviness in matter or dispels it when it is present. Malleability is capable of dispelling rigidity in matter. And wieldiness is capable of dispelling unwieldiness in matter. These three must arise together. When one of the four primary elements is out of balance with the others in any part of the body due to climate, food, or mood, that part no longer has lightness but tends to be heavy and awkward; it is no longer malleable but tends to be hard and rigid; and it is not as wieldy in its movements but tends to become difficult and strained. When the four elements are balanced and the body is in good health or one is in happy mood, the lightness malleability and wieldiness dispell the weariness, rigidity and unwieldiness in matter, so the body becomes light, malleable, and wieldy.

4) Characteristics of Matter

There are four characteristics of matter, namely production, continuity, decay, and impermanence.

Production is the first arising moment of a material process. After full development of faculties, the arising moment of material process is called continuity. Actually, production and continuity is the same, both are the arising moment of matter. These two are termed the birth of matter. Decay is the maturing of the same material process that leads to its dissolution or termination. And impermanence is the complete breaking up of the same material process.

Therefore, in the ultimate reality, each matter (*rūpa*) has undergone three sub-moments of arising, static, and dissolving.

Here ends the ten non-concretely produced matter.

Unravelling the Mystery of Matter

All matter does not associate with either the wholesome or unwholesome, which are applicable only to mental phenomena. Unlike consciousness,

which arises one moment after another, matter arises in a group, called rūpa kalāpa. The life span of one unit of matter lasts for seventeen moments of consciousness. Seventeen moments of consciousness arise and pass away while one rūpa kalāpa arises and finishes. Each kalāpa is so minute that it cannot be seen with the naked eye. Even the finest dust particle is an aggregate of a very large number of kalāpas. Bacteria, composed of countless kalāpas, can only be seen with the most powerful microscope, but the mind well trained in concentration, is able to unravel the mystery of matter.

The Origination of Matter

As the teaching of the Buddha is mainly concise with cause and effect, matter could not come into being without causes. Matter is originated, born, or produced by four causes of kamma, consciousness, temperature or fire and nutriment.

1) **Kamma:** Suppose, in a past life, owing to the craving for existence, a being observed morality with the intention to be reborn as a nun in the dispensation of the Buddha. When this kamma ripened and produced its result, her desire is fulfilled. From the moment of her conception, the thirty matter of body-decad-kalāpa, heart-base-decad kalāpa, and female-decad-kalāpa, which make up the embryo, arises. The arising or setting up of these thirty matter is called production, while after the development of faculties, the subsequent arising of these and other matter is called continuity. Eye, ear, nose, and tongue decad-kalāpas arise gradually. These five sensitive phenomena, born from kamma spring from a desire to touch, see, hear, smell and taste respectively. The arising of female decad-kalāpa is also the result of kamma, spring from one's craving to become a woman. The matter of femininity disperses all over the body, making clear the mark, sign, feature, and structure of the body of a female. The arising of heart-base serves as support for rebirth-linking consciousness, born of past kamma. Therefore, it is said, the eight inseparable elements, the five sensitive materialities, the sexual materiality and the heart-base are produced by kamma.

Kamma determines the sex, appearance and health of the human being in conformity with the deeds done in the past. Wholesome and unwholesome kamma manages to form a beautiful or ugly appearance correspondingly. Some may become hungry ghosts or animals, all differing in appearance, etc., according to their evils done.

As expounded by the Buddha, the direct cause for rebirth is kamma, but for the result to materialize, it requires craving. Thus all kamma-produced materiality (the thirty matter as mentioned), has craving as its root. Here we see something of the realities of the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering. To cling to these kamma-produced materiality in which they continuously arise and pass away in constant flux as 'I', 'mine' and 'myself', is the First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering.

- 2) **Consciousness:** Every consciousness that is dependent on the heart-base is able to produce consciousness-born matter. When you want to say something, you pay attention to the heart-base, and with the help of concentration you can discern that many thousands of pure-octad kalāpas are produced and spread all over the body because of the intention of the mind to say something. Many kamma-born kalāpas are also found in the throat. Penetrating into these kalāpas, you can find they contain at least eight inseparable elements. When the consciousness-born kalāpas reach the throat, the earth element in the consciousness-born kalāpa strikes the earth element of another kalāpa born of kamma in the throat, producing sound. So, words are uttered. Just like when you strike or knock the door, because of the striking of the earth element in our hand against the earth element in the door, the sound occurs. This is verbal intimation.

Or, when one intends to shake hands with a friend, that arising of intention produces many consciousness-born kalāpa, spreading all over the body. The wind element in consciousness-born kalāpa causes the hand to move from one place to another. Thus, one can move one's hand to convey one's intention. This is bodily intimation.

Thus, bodily intimation, verbal intimation, and the eight inseparable elements are said to be borne of consciousness.

When one gets angry, many consciousness-born octad-kalāpas are produced and spread throughout the body. Owing to anger, the fire element in consciousness-born kalāpas becomes excessive and predominant. This fire element heats up the whole body resulting in the rapid heartbeat, the reddened face and roughness of hot breaths. When the fire element is excessive, wind element also becomes active causing the shaking and trembling of the body, when one becomes angry.

However when one is developing deep concentration, many powerful consciousness-born octad-kalāpas are produced internally, within the body. Owing to the concentrated mind, the colour element within each kalāpa becomes bright. When many kalāpas arise

simultaneously and successively, then the colour element of one kalāpa and the colour element of another, arise closely to give such brightness as to manifest as light. This light only (produced by consciousness-born kalāpas) only occur internally within the body can be witnessed by meditators themselves.

- 3) **Temperature or fire:** Each rūpa kalāpa born of kamma, consciousness, temperature, and nutriment contains fire element. This fire element, when it reaches the static stage, is able to produce a new generation of temperature-produced octad kalāpas. This is the law of temperature (*utu niyama*). The new generations of temperature-produced octad kalāpas themselves contain the fire element, which produces further generations of temperature-produced octad kalāpas. In practice, when a meditator discerns, say, body-decad kalāpa borne of kamma, he sees the fire-element in that kalāpa produces first generation of temperature produced octad-kalāpas. Then he discerns the fire-elements in a rūpa-kalāpa of that first generation, he sees that it too, reproduces the second generation. In the same way, the fire element in a rūpa-kalāpa of second generation reproduces. Thus, the fire element in the body-decad kalāpa reproduces through four or five generations.

Kamma-born kalāpa E1st generation E2nd generation E3rd generation E4th generation E5th generation
 Temperature
 produced
 octad-kalāpas

Temperature can be produced both internally and externally (outside the body). Internally temperature-born matter includes undigested food, pus, feces, and urine. Externally temperature-born matter includes ocean, mountains, stone, food, clothing, jewellery, money, table and corpse and so on.

How is a corpse an externally temperature-produced matter? This can be realised by meditators who discern materiality externally. Once having discerned materiality internally, they advert their attention externally, discerning the four elements of the corpse, they see the corpse breaks down into many thousands of kalāpas. They see the fire element in each kalāpa produces new generations of temperature-produced kalāpas, of which the fire element in them, in turn, produces new generations. This process repeats again and again until finally the force of fire element of the temperature-born kalāpa, becomes weakened and only produces small

amount of temperature-produced kalāpa. The corpse decays accordingly, and finally becomes dust. When the fire element stops reproducing any further, even the dust disappears in the world. Conditionally arisen dhamma is always marked with impermanence because of its unstability of causes.

- 4) **Nutriments:** The nutritive essence is present in all rūpa kalāpas both internally and externally. When the external nutritive essence is swallowed, it meets with digestive heat, and produces the first generation of pure octad- kalāpas. The meditators, when they discern four elements in the undigested food in the stomach, during or after eating, see the undigested food, which is temperature-born matter, break down into uncountable rūpa kalāpas. In each kalāpa there are eight inseparable elements.

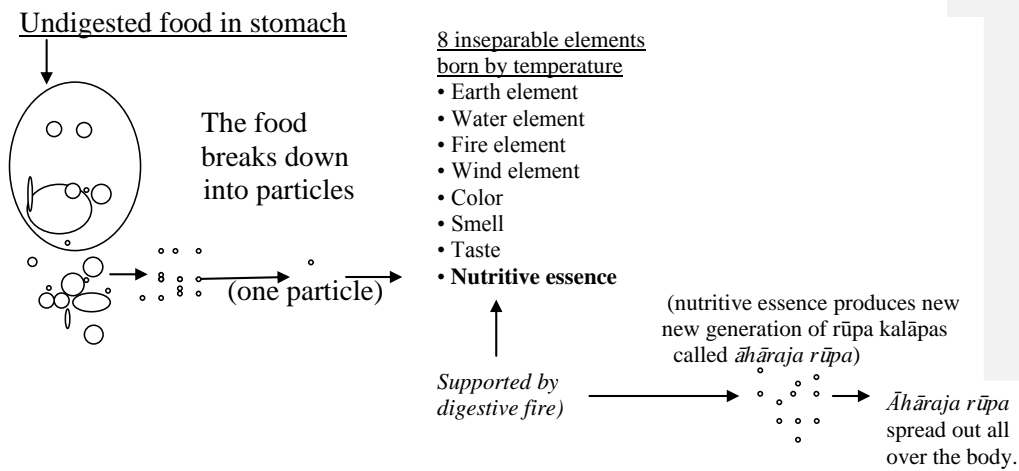
When the nutritive essence in these temperature-born kalāpas is supported by the kammically produced digestive fire around the stomach, the nutritive essence in temperature-born kalāpas, is able to produce new generations of rūpa kalāpas, called matter-born-by-nutriments (*āhāraja rūpa*). The nutriment-born kalāpas spread out all over the body, fortifying the body with its nutritive essence (chart 7). Every kalāpa, whether born by kamma, temperature, consciousness or nutriment contains nutritive essence. The nutritive essence inside each of these new generation of nutriment-born matter supports the nutritive essence within each kamma-born kalāpa, consciousness-born kalāpa, temperature-born kalāpa, and the nutriment-born kalāpa in the body, producing many further generations of rūpa kalāpas.

In every case, the nutritive essence of any rūpa kalāpa, produced by the four causes, (kamma, consciousness, temperature and nutriment), reproduced only when it is supported by digestive fire. In this way, the nutriment in food eaten in one day can sustain our body for up to seven days, although the number of generations produced depends on the quality of the food.

Digestive fire is the fire-element of life-nonad-kalāpas produced by kamma. They are found throughout the body. When an injection of medicine is given to the body, the nutritive essence of the medicine is digested by digestive fire and is spread throughout the body. Therefore healthy and suitable food, supported by strong digestive fire (produced by one's good kamma), is able to produce many generations of healthy matter, thus sustaining the well being of a person.

How Matter is Born by Nutriment

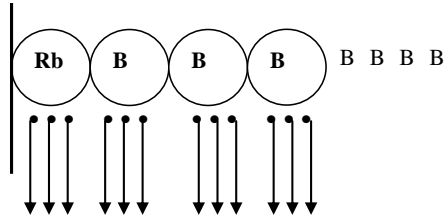
Chart 7



The Continuity of Occurance of Matter

Kamma-born matter

When does the materiality or matter produced by the four causes start to arise and form in one's life? Kamma-born matter (*kammaja-rūpa*) of body, sex and heart base octad-kalāpa for human beings starts to form at the arising moment of rebirth consciousness and it goes on forming continuously at every sub-moment. Every moment of consciousness goes through three sub-moments of arising, static and dissolution.

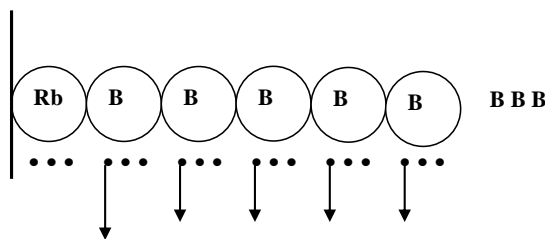


Kamma-born rūpa starts to form at the arising moment of rebirth consciousness

Key: Rb = rebirth consciousness; B = bhavaṅga;
 ••• three sub-moments of arising, static and dissolution

Consciousness-born matter

Consciousness-born matter (*cittaṅga-rūpa*), spring up starting from the arising moment of the bhavaṅga consciousness immediately following rebirth consciousness. It continues to be formed at the arising moment of each subsequent consciousness for the whole life. The rebirth-linking consciousness does not produce consciousness-born matter because this consciousness is a new comer to the new existence. Neither can the five-sense consciousness produce consciousness-born matter as they lack the power to do so. The mental phenomena are strongest at the arising moment, hence consciousness-born matter only arises at the arising moment, not otherwise.

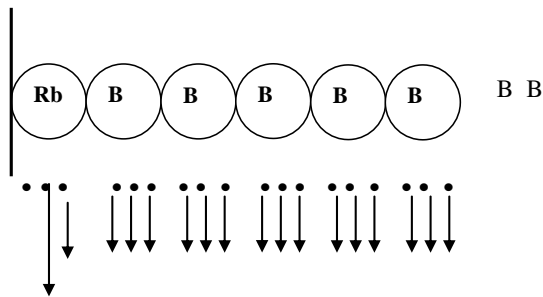


Consciousness-born rūpa starts to form at the arising moment of bhavaṅga consciousness.

Key: Rb = rebirth consciousness; B = bhavaṅga;
 ••• = three sub-moments of arising, static and dissolution

Temperature-born matter

Temperature-born matter (*utuja-rūpa*) starts to form from the static moment of rebirth consciousness, where the fire element in the kamma-born matter comes to the static moment and produces temperature-born matter. After that, the fire element in each rūpa kalāpa born of any of the four causes continues to produce temperature-born matter when it reaches the static moment, like consciousness, matter goes through three sub-moments of arising, static and dissolution. Matter is stronger at static moment. So fire element produces temperature-born matter only at static moment.



Temperature-born rūpa starts to form at the static stage of rebirth consciousness and continues to form at all three sub-moments afterwards.

Key: Rb = rebirth consciousness; B = bhavaṅga;
 ••• three sub-moments of arising, static and dissolution

Nutrient-born matter

Every kalāpa in the body also contains nutritive essence (*ojā*). But matter-born-by-nutrient (*āhraja-rūpa*) starts to form when the internal nutritive essence (present in each rūpa kalāpa since birth) meets the external nutritive essence (from food) at the time of diffusion of nutritive essence from the food taken when supported by digestive fire.

The Moment of Death

At the time of death, kamma-born matter that arose earlier continues till the death-moment and then ceases. Following that, the consciousness-born matter and nutriment-born matter come to cessation. The temperature-born matter remains in the form of the corpse.

The Relation between Mind and Matter

What is the relation between mind (consciousness and mental factors) and matter? Mind arises dependent on the matter of the heart-base or the five sensitive matters: eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, and so on. *So no mind can arise without depending on matter*, except immaterial-sphere consciousness in the immaterial-sphere realm, where the beings have no matter. Matter, not only becomes the base of consciousness and mental factors, matter also becomes the object of consciousness and mental factors. Mind and matter are interdependent. When the mind is pure and wholesome the body is robust and healthy. On the other hand, the body becomes sick if the mind is obsessed or overwhelmed by defilements.

Matter is not 'Self'

The combination of consciousness, mental factors and matter, forms what is conventionally called human being, deva or animal. Not understanding that matter is in constant flux, conditionally arisen and has the nature of wasting away, of disintegrating and of ceasing, beings wrongly take matter as 'self'. They are overwhelmed by the thought: the matter is mine; I am the matter and the matter is my 'self'. Thus we develop craving, conceit and wrong view, the three factors extending the round of rebirths (*papañca dhamma*).

The continual coming into existence of consciousness and mental factors together with matter in succession is called *saṃsāra*, “perpetual wandering” in the round of rebirths. Compared to the course of *saṃsāra*, a single lifetime constitutes only a fleeting moment. It appears so mysterious to many and yet it is easily unravelled to one who has penetrative insight.

4) NIBBĀNA

The fourth ultimate reality is Nibbāna. It is supramundane, that is, beyond the world of mind-and-matter or the five aggregates of clinging. Nibbāna is the extinction of all greed, hatred, and delusion, and is the state of final deliverance from the suffering inherent in conditioned existence. It is unconditioned dhamma (*asañkhata dhamma*). The other three ultimate realities—citta, cetasika, and rūpa—are conditioned dhamma (*sañkhata dhamma*), which arise due to causes and their causes are always impermanent. Every conditional dhamma has three characteristics: arising (*uppāda*), change of state (*thitassa aññathatta*) and dissolution (*vaya*). Phenomena that arise due to causes and conditions are necessarily marked by impermanence. Even the causes are subject to change and dissolution, how could the effects be permanent? Since they are transient and cannot be held on to, they are inevitably unsatisfactory.

However, Nibbāna is not conditioned by any cause. Hence it is not subject to any becoming, change of state, and dissolution. It is permanent, happiness, and not-self.

Nibbāna is the object of the four Paths (*magga*) and four Fruitions (*phala*). Path and Fruition can only be achieved through vipassanā practice. One has to develop different stages of insight before one realizes Nibbāna. These stages of insight are:

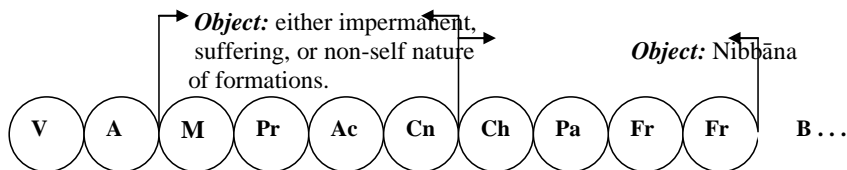
1. Knowledge of Analysis of Mind-and-Matter (*nāmarūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa*).
2. Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).
3. Knowledge of Comprehension (*sammasana-ñāṇa*).
4. Knowledge of Rise and Fall (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*).
5. Knowledge of Dissolution (*bhaṅga-ñāṇa*).
6. Knowledge of Fearful (*bhaya-ñāṇa*).
7. Knowledge of Danger (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*).
8. Knowledge of Disenchantment (*nibbidā-ñāṇa*).
9. Knowledge of Desire for Deliverance (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*).
10. Knowledge of Reflective Contemplation (*paṭisañkhā-ñāṇa*).
11. Knowledge of Equanimity Towards Formations (*sañkhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*).

When one's insight knowledge becomes matured by contemplating, either, anicca, dukkha, or anatta of formations (*sañkhāra*), one attains Nibbāna. At that

time, the cognitive process of supramundane stream-entry path (*sotāpatti magga vīthi*) runs as follows:

FIRST ATTAINMENT OF PATH AND FRUITION

Chart 8



Key: V= vibrating bhavaṅga; A= arresting bhavaṅga; M = mind-door adverting consciousness; Pr = preparation; Ac = access; Cn = conformity; Ch = change-of-lineage; Pa = path; Fr = fruition; B= bhavaṅga.

First, bhavaṅga vibrates and then another bhavaṅga is arrested. Then mind-door adverting consciousness arises observing, either, anicca, dukkha, or anatta of formations. Then one wholesome sense-sphere citta (*mahā-kusala citta*) associated with knowledge arises four times as javana consciousness, performing the function of :-

- 1) Preparation (*parikamma*), which prepares the mental continuum for attainment of Path consciousness;
- 2) Access (*upacāra*), which arises in proximity to the attainment of Path consciousness;
- 3) Conformity (*anuloma*), which harmonizes the preceding moments with the subsequent attainment of the Path. After this, one's consciousness no longer enters into or settles down on any field of formations.

- 4) Then the change-of-lineage (*gotrabhu*) arises, which takes as its object the signless, the non-occurrence, the cessation, Nibbāna which passes out of the lineage of worldlings (*puthujjana*) and enters into the lineage of the Noble Ones (*Ariya*). It gives the sign to the Path to come into being, and ceases.

Without pausing, the Path follows in uninterrupted continuity, piercing and exploding the mass of greed, hatred, and delusion, never pierced and exploded before. Path consciousness arises only once, taking Nibbāna as object. After Path consciousness, without any delay in time, there arise two or three moments of Fruition consciousness, which are its result, taking Nibbāna as object. At this point, one becomes a stream-enterer. After that the mind lapses into bhavaṅga again.

Although change-of-lineage takes Nibbāna as object, it does not perform the function of eliminating defilements as does Path consciousness. Path consciousness arises for only one moment then passes away. The same type of Path consciousness never arises again for a second time, along the saṃsāra. Even then, it is powerful enough to eradicate the defilements. Stream-entry path consciousness permanently uproots three fetters:

1. *Personality View (sakkāya-diṭṭhi)*. He no longer considers the five aggregates as I, mine, or my self.
2. *Attachment to Rites and Rituals (sīlabbataparāmāsa)*. Such as the practise of imitating the behaviour of cows and dogs, various forms of torturing the body such as sleeping on thorns etc., thinking that the practice will purify the defilements and lead to escape from the round of rebirths.
3. *Doubt (vicikicchā)*. Doubt towards the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. After becoming a stream-enterer, he has unshakeable faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha. This can be verified by the story of Suppabuddha, the leper (Dhammapada 66) who had realized the Dhamma while listening attentively to a discourse given by the Buddha. When the crowd had dispersed, he followed the Buddha to the monastery. Sakka, king of the devas, wishing to test the leper's confidence in the Triple Gem, appeared to him and said, "You are only a poor man, living on what you get by begging, with no one to fall back on. I can give you immense wealth if you deny the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha and say that you have no use for them." Suppabuddha replied, "I am

certainly not a poor man, with no one to rely on. I am a rich man; I possess the Seven Noble Treasures which noble ones possess: I have confidence (*saddhā*), morality (*sīla*), shame of wrongdoing (*hiri*), fear of wrongdoing (*ottappa*), learning [(*suta*, including learning knowledge (*agama-suta*) and direct knowledge (*adhigama-suta*) such as analysis of mind-and-matter and discerning cause and effect], generosity (*cāga*), and insight knowledge (*paññā*).”

Then Sakka went to the Buddha and related the conversation between himself and Suppabuddha. The Buddha explained to Sakka that it would not be easy even for a hundred or a thousand Sakkas to influence Suppabuddha and keep him away from the Triple Gem. This is how one achieves unshakable faith in the Triple Gem when one becomes a stream-enterer.

Stream-entry path consciousness shortens the beginningless round of rebirths. However negligent he may be, the stream-enterer is bound to make an end of suffering when he has travelled and traversed among deities and human beings for the seventh time. He is incapable of violating the basic five precepts. Like the case of the Buddha's lay woman disciple Khujjutarā, a servant of Queen Sāmāvatī. She attained the path and fruition of stream-entry after listening to a discourse given by the Buddha. Feeling tranquil and uplifted, she changed into a different person, with no knowledge of what has transformed within. Since it is impossible for one who has seen the Path to conceal one's wrong deeds, Khujjutarā confessed to the Queen that she had not been performing her duty honestly. She had only used half of the money given her to buy flowers and had kept the other half. Sāmāvatī, being benevolent, forgave her. The difference is the total unwavering faith in the Triple gem and as a stream-enterer, one is incapable of violating the basic morality.

The path and fruition of stream-entry closes all doors to the four woeful states, which is a great blessing. It provides actual experience of the seven noble treasures. It abandons the eightfold wrong path. Path consciousness is wholesome consciousness, fruition consciousness is resultant consciousness. Path consciousness gives its fruit immediately after its own occurrence. This is the special quality of supramundane dhamma: it is *akaliko* (takes no time). Mundane wholesome dhamma gives its fruit after a certain period of time or after creating a delay, say, ten days, one month, four years, ten years, or even in lives thereafter. But Path consciousness bears its fruit without delay.

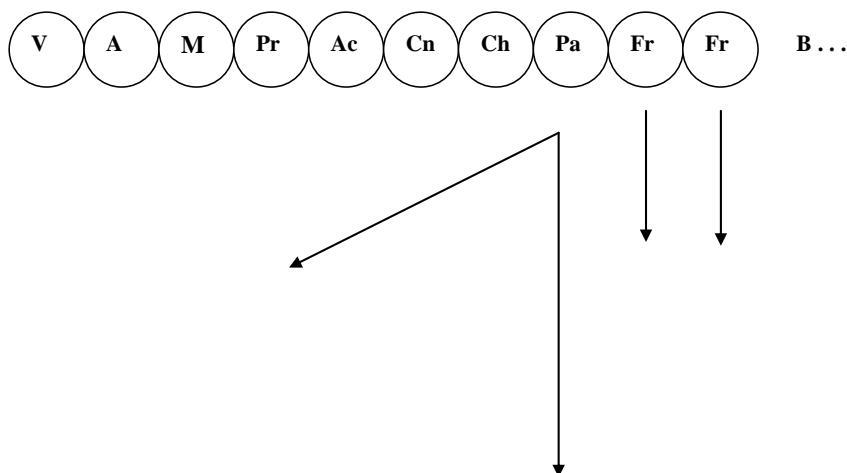
What is the difference between path consciousness and fruition consciousness? Path consciousness has the function of eradicating (or of permanently attenuating) defilements; fruition consciousness has the function of experiencing the degree of liberation, after defilements have been eradicated accordingly, made possible by the corresponding Path consciousness.

At the times of penetrating the Truths each one of the four path knowledges is said to exercise four functions in a single moment. These are: full understanding, abandoning, realizing, and developing. Just as a lamp performs four functions simultaneously in a single moment - it burns the wick, makes light appear, dispels darkness, and uses up the oil.

Similarly, path knowledge penetrates to the Four Truths simultaneously in a single moment: it penetrates to suffering by penetrating it with full understanding; penetrates to origination by penetrating it with abandoning; penetrates to cessation (*Nibbāna*) by penetrating it with realizing; and penetrates to the path (Noble Eightfold Path) by penetrating it with developing. What is meant by this? By making cessation (*Nibbāna*) its object, the path consciousness reaches, sees, and pierces the Four Noble Truths.

ATTAINMENT OF PATH & FRUITION

Chart 9



**PENETRATE INTO THE
FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS:**

1. *Full Understanding of the Truth of Suffering*
2. *Abandoning the Origin of the Truth of Suffering*
3. *Realizing the Cessation of the Truth of Suffering.*

Resultant Consciousness

Function: Experience the degree of liberation after the defilements had been eradicated by Path consciousness

Wholesome Consciousness

Function: Eradicating defilements
Stream-entry Path consciousness eradicates 3 fetters:

1. Personality view
2. Doubt about the Triple Gem

Key: V= vibrating bhavaṅga; A= arresting bhavaṅga; M = mind-door adverting consciousness; Pr = preparation; Ac= access; Cn = Conformity; Ch = change-of-lineage; Pa = path; Fr = fruition;
B= bhavaṅga.

When path consciousness of stream-entry arises taking Nibbāna as object, thirty six mental factors are associated with this path consciousness, that also take Nibbāna as object. What are the thirty-six mental factors?

1. *Contact:* causes Stream-entry consciousness together with associated mental factors and Nibbāna to impinge.
2. *Feeling:* experiences the bliss of Nibbāna.
3. *Perception:* makes a sign, “This is Nibbāna.”
4. *Volition:* urges the consciousness together with associated mental factors in acting upon Nibbāna.
5. *One-pointedness:* fixes the consciousness together with associated mental factors into Nibbāna.
6. *Life-faculty:* sustains the vitality of consciousness together with associated mental factors.
7. *Attention:* directs the consciousness together with associated mental factors towards Nibbāna.
8. *Initial application of mind:* places the consciousness together with the associated mental states on Nibbāna.

9. *Sustained application of mind*: continuously sustains the consciousness together with the associated mental factors on Nibbāna.
10. *Decision*: makes a decision, “This is Nibbāna.”
11. *Effort*: the effort to support the consciousness together with the associated mental factors, and the effort to know Nibbāna.
12. *Joy*: satisfaction in Nibbāna.
13. *Desire*: desire to attain to Nibbāna.
14. *Faith*: unshakeable faith in Nibbāna.
15. *Mindfulness*: makes the consciousness together with the associated mental factors sink into Nibbāna, not forgetting Nibbāna.
- 16,17. *Shame of wrongdoing and fear of wrongdoing*: in the attainment of path knowledge, the desire to commit wrongdoing is eradicated. Therefore, at the time of attainment, the strength of moral shame and moral fear are already there.
18. *Non-greed*: non-adherence to Nibbāna as “mine.”
19. *Non-hatred*: the agreeableness state of mind when sees Nibbāna.
20. *Neutrality of mind*: balances the consciousness together with the associated mental factors so they can function together equally towards Nibbāna .
- 21,22. *Tranquillity of consciousness and tranquility of mental factors*: tranquillity of consciousness and mental factors at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.
- 23,24. *Lightness of consciousness and lightness of mental factors*: lightness and swiftness of consciousness and mental factors at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.
- 25,26. *Malleability of consciousness and malleability of mental factors*: pliancy of consciousness and mental factors at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.
- 27,28. *Wieldiness of consciousness and wieldiness of mental factors*: adaptability of consciousness and mental factors at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.
- 29,30. *Proficiency of consciousness and proficiency of mental factors*: the consciousness and mental factors become skillful at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.
- 31,32. *Rectitude of consciousness and rectitude of mental factors*: uprightness of consciousness and mental factors at the time of taking Nibbāna as object.

33-35. *Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood*: these three arise together as the three morality factors of the Noble Eightfold Path that eradicate wrong speech, action, and livelihood.

36. *Wisdom faculty*: penetrates Nibbāna and removes the ignorance that covers the Four Noble Truths.

The mental factor of wisdom faculty associates with stream-entry path consciousness, penetrates into the Four Noble Truths. It performs the four functions of:

- 1) *Full understanding of the Truth of Suffering* - the five aggregates of clinging which is the Truth of Suffering, has been known.
- 2) *Abandoning the Origin of the Truth of Suffering* - craving for sensual pleasure that is strong enough to lead to rebirth in the four woeful states, has been abandoned.
- 3) *Realizing the Cessation of the Truth of Suffering* - which is Nibbāna, the only unconditioned element, has been realized.
- 4) *Developing the supramundane Noble Eightfold Path* - seeing Nibbāna is called Right View. The application of the mind to Nibbāna is called Right Thought. The effort to realize Nibbāna is called Right Effort. Mindfulness on Nibbāna is called Right Mindfulness. Concentration on Nibbāna is called Right Concentration. The defilements that can cause offences against Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood are destroyed by path knowledge. Thus at the time a meditator realizes Nibbāna, all eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path has been developed.

So only at the Sotāpanna stage can one understand practically, what are the Four Noble Truths by this path consciousness. As Buddha says in Saṃyutta Nikāya: “Monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that we have run so long, wandered so long in *samsāra*, in this cycle of continuity, both you and I. But when these Four Noble Truths are understood and penetrated, rooted out is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no more coming to be.”

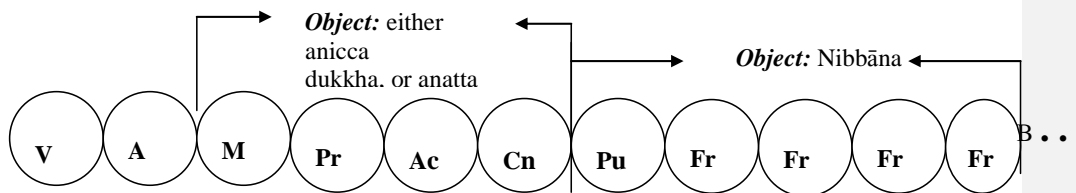
Nibbāna can only be experienced by Noble Ones (*Ariya*). There are four kinds of Noble Individuals: the stream-enterer (*sotāpanna*), once-returner (*sakadāgami*), non-returner (*anāgmi*), and *Arahant*. Each Noble One can enter into the Fruition Attainment (*phala samāpatti*) that corresponds to the path they have realized. The aim is to experience the bliss of Nibbāna. The fruition consciousness can arise and pass away repeatedly, taking Nibbāna as

object, up to one hour, two hours, three hours, when a noble person enters into Fruition Attainment (*phala samāpatti*).

The Fruition Attainment Cognitive Process runs as follows:

ATTAINMENT OF FRUITION

Chart 10



Key: V= vibrating bhavaṅga; A= arresting bhavaṅga; M = mind-door adverting consciousness; Pr = preparation; Ac= access; Cn = Conformity; Pu = Purification; Fr = fruition; B= bhavaṅga.

In developing Fruition Attainment, the stream-enterer has to meditate on the three characteristics of formations—anicca, dukkha, anatta—until the Fruition Attainment cognitive process (*phala samāpatti vīthi*) arises. When one of the three characteristics of existence enters the avenue of the mind-door of a *sotāpanna*, bhavaṅga vibrates twice and becomes arrested. Then mind-door adverting consciousness adverts to that characteristic, followed by preparation, access, and conformity, which also take that characteristic as object. Then follows purification (*vodāna*), which takes Nibbāna as object. After that, stream-enterer fruition consciousness, observing Nibbāna, functions as javana many times as long as the person wishes, for up to seven days. Then bhavaṅga arises and the person emerges from Fruition Attainment.

Here Purification (*vodāna*) replaces change-of-lineage, since during the attainment of the path, the lineage of worldlings is permanently cut off.

Here ends the explanation of the Four Ultimate Realities.

Mind-and-Matter Synonymous with the Five Aggregates

Why is it so important to study all the types of consciousness, mental factors, and matter, or, in brief, mind-and-matter? Because these three are synonymous with the five aggregates, that beings cling to as ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘myself’, and are the objects of insight meditation. They are the Truth of Suffering, which must be fully understood or known (*pariññeyya*) by insight, said the Buddha in his first discourse after his enlightenment, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. He said, “What is the Truth of Suffering? In short, the five aggregates of clinging are the Truth of Suffering.” What are the five aggregates?

- 1) **The aggregate of materiality** (*rūpakkhanda*), which is the same as the twenty-eight kinds of matter, whether past, present, future, internal, external, superior, inferior, gross, subtle, far or near.
- 2) **The aggregate of feeling** (*vedanākkhandha*), which is the same as the mental factor of feeling, whether past, present, future, internal, external, superior, inferior, gross, subtle, far or near.
- 3) **The aggregate of perception** (*saññākkhandha*), which is the same as the mental factor of perception, whether past, present, future, internal, external, superior, inferior, gross, subtle, far or near.
- 4) **The aggregate of mental formations** (*sākhārakkhandha*), which, excluding feeling and perception, are the remaining fifty mental factors, whether past, present, future, internal, external, superior, inferior, gross, subtle, far or near.
- 5) **The aggregate of consciousness** (*viññāṇakkhandha*), equal to the eighty-one types of consciousness, whether past, present, future, internal, external, superior, inferior, gross, subtle, far or near.

The five aggregates and mind and matter is the same, the only difference is in the words. The five aggregates of clinging is the Truth of Suffering, which should be known, as said by the Buddha. He continued and said that The Noble Truth of Suffering has been known by him. So that is why it is important to study these conditioned dhammas, the ultimate realities, as they are the objects of insight knowledge, which should be known first.

THE NEAR-DEATH COGNITIVE PROCESS

Consciousness continues to flow on, all the way up to the near-death moment, at which time one of the following three objects will necessarily present itself to the dying person through any one of the six (sense) doors at the last javana process, the near-death cognitive process.

These three objects are:

- 1) **Kamma:** wholesome and unwholesome deeds or volition done in the past. It appears to the mind door as if it were being done at that moment. For example, a monk may see himself preaching a sermon. A butcher may see himself slaughtering an animal.
- 2) **Sign of kamma (*kamma nimitta*):** Wholesome signs of kamma may show a pagoda, oil lamps, fruits or flowers one had offered, or any instrument one had used, when performing wholesome kamma. Unwholesome signs of kamma may include a knife, gun, axe, bomb, poison or any instrument one had used, when performing unwholesome kamma. These can be sight, sound, smell, taste, tangible object, or a mental object. Those who performed meritorious deeds such as building hospitals, monasteries, or roads, during the dying moment will see the hospital and monasteries as kamma nimitta. On the other hand, those who had slaughtered animals might hear the screaming of the victim or see the knife used when slaughtering the animals.
- 3) **Sign of destination (*gati nimitta*):** the sign that appears at the near-death moment that shows where one may be reborn. If you are going to be reborn in hell, you may see black dogs chasing you, hell wardens pulling you, or fire and may feel hot. If you are going to be born as a human being, you may see the red color in the mother's womb. If you are going to be reborn as an animal, like a monkey, you may see a forest. Some may see brightness, celestial mansion or deities or hear celestial music if they are going to reborn in heaven.

One of these three objects (*nimitta*) will arise during the near-death cognitive process for all beings except an Arahant, because an Arahant has no more rebirths. Why do this sign arise? It arises because of past kamma that has met all the conditions to produce rebirth consciousness in the next life.

Here is a good question to consider. Since we have performed a diversity of kamma, which kamma will produce its result first?

ORDER OF RIPENING OF KAMMA

With respect to the order in which kamma bears results, there are four kinds of kamma:

1. **Weighty kamma** (*garuka kamma*)
2. **Death proximate kamma** (*āsanna kamma*)
3. **Habitual kamma** (*āciṇṇa kamma*)
4. **Reserve kamma** (*katattā kamma*)

Weighty kamma (*garuka kamma*) is strong and powerful kamma that is sure to produce rebirth consciousness in the immediate next life. On the wholesome side, this kamma is the attainment of fine-material jhāna and immaterial jhāna and the maintaining of them up to the dying moment. Supramundane Path consciousness is also weighty kamma since it closes the doors of the four woeful planes, but it cannot produce rebirth consciousness in any existence. On the unwholesome side, there are five:

- i) Creating a schism in the sangha
- ii) Wounding a Buddha
- iii) Murdering an Arahant
- iv) Matricide
- v) Patricide

Here is a story to illustrate how unwholesome weighty kamma produces rebirth in hell:

Devadatta was the cousin of the Buddha. He envied the Buddha receiving more respect, honour, and offerings than him. He aspired to head the order of monks. Under the influence of the mental corruptions of delusion, anger, and envy, he tried to kill the Buddha. One day, when the Buddha was pacing up and down on the foot of Gijjhakūta Hill, Devadatta pushed down a big piece of rock with the intention to kill the Buddha. The splinter of the rock hurt the big toe of the Buddha. This is the weighty kamma he committed. Failing to kill the Buddha, he tried another tactic: he tried to break up the Order of the Sangha by taking some newly admitted monks away

with him; however, most of them were brought back by the chief disciples, Venerables Sariputta and Mahā Moggallāna. This is the most serious weighty kamma he committed that produced his rebirth consciousness in hell immediately after death. Before death took place, he was swallowed up by the earth and reborn in *Avīci* Hell.¹⁸

Fixed wrong view that denies the basis for morality or kamma and its consequences is also termed as one of the weighty kammās, if one adheres to it up to the near-death moment. Anyone who committed one of the five weighty kammās is unable to attain any jhānas or Nibbāna in this life because the evil kamma would create an insurmountable obstruction. This is why King Ajatasattu, after killing his father, failed to attain Stream-entry path and fruition while first listening to Buddha's discourse, although he had the perfection to attain path and fruit.

Death proximate kamma (*āsanna kamma*) is kamma that is performed or remembered shortly before death, which is immediately prior to the last javana process. When there is no weighty kamma, death proximate kamma will ripen first.

There are several stories of death proximate kamma. Maṭṭakuṇḍalī, the only son of a stingy millionaire, was dying of jaundice because his father would not spend any money to consult a doctor. The father had his dying son put out near the front door, in case the visiting relatives would see his riches within the house, if they come by to see his son.

The Buddha, perceiving with his Divine Eye the sad plight of the poor boy, who had never performed any generosity, appeared before him. When Maṭṭakuṇḍalī saw the Buddha, his heart was filled with such purity and deep devotion. At that moment with the deep faith in the Buddha, he died and was immediately reborn in heaven. This is the good death proximate kamma Maṭṭakuṇḍalī had performed mentally, shortly before death that brought forth good rebirth in heavenly state.¹⁹ The Buddha said, "Mind is the forerunner, mind is chief; mind-made are they." Because one speaks or acts with pure mind, happiness follows one, even as one's shadow that never leaves.

The next two examples show how negative death proximate kamma manifest. During Buddha's time, a monk was offered a robe made with the

¹⁸ Dhammapada Commentary I

¹⁹ Dhammapada Commentary I

finest material and he became very attached to it. However he died before he could wear it and was reborn as a flea, within the folds of his favourite robe. After his funeral, his fellow monks were going to distribute his belongings. The Buddha with his Divine Ear heard the frantic cries of the flea about being robbed of his property. He asked Venerable Ananda to postpone the distribution for seven days. When asked, the Buddha explained that because of the attachment to the robe, the monk had been reborn as a flea and is residing within the cloth. If the cloth had been given away, the flea's anger would have caused another rebirth in hell. After seven days, the good kamma he had accumulated as a monk matured, and he was reborn in Tusita Heaven.²⁰ In this case, the good monk's only fault was to harbour a strong attachment to his own robe.

The monk's thought was rooted in attachment (*lobha*), and it persisted until just before the dying moment, so it is potent enough to cause rebirth in such a woeful state, even if for a short time. Beware! Any of our belongings can become the object of our attachment.

The next case is of a rich man named Toddeya, who lived in Buddha's time, in Tudi Village near Sāvatti. He was very stingy and was much attached to his properties. When he died because of such great attachments, he was immediately reborn in the very house he lived in, but as a dog.²¹

Understanding the importance of death proximate kamma, sons and daughters or relatives and friends should avoid crying in front of the dying person or dispute over the distribution of inheritance as this would disturb his mental tranquility; instead they should make some arrangements to help the dying person to have good death proximate kamma.

For example, they can perform some charity on his behalf and make it known to him; keep the Buddha's image in the room to inspire faith and joy; decorate with flowers and incense to make the environment calm and peaceful; invite monks or friends for *paritta* (protection) or sutta chanting to direct his mind to wholesomeness; radiate loving-kindness to him; direct his mind to the meditation subject which he regularly practises such as mindfulness of breathing; remind him of his good deeds done previously. These various means arouse his wholesome mental states so that he can pass away peacefully and joyfully to ensure a good rebirth in the next life.

When one is reborn in a good existence, such as the human plane or deva plane, one has plenty of opportunity to cultivate good. When many wholesome deeds are accumulated, the unwholesome deeds we have stored

²⁰ Dhammapada Commentary 2

²¹ Majjhima Nikāya Culakammavibhanga Sutta

up along the saṃsāra lose their power to ripen so soon, and even if they ripen, the force from them is lessened because of the back-up of wholesome kamma.

Habitual kamma (*āciṇṇa kamma*) is any deed that one habitually performs either good or bad. For a butcher, his habitual kamma is slaughtering animals; for a doctor, his habitual kamma is treating patients; for devoted Buddhists, their habitual kamma might be offering the four requisites to monks and nuns, keeping five or eight precepts, listening Dhamma, practicing tranquillity or insight meditation and offering flowers, lights and incense to the Buddha.

Here is a story to show how habitual kamma produces its result in the immediate next life: In Sāvatti lived a lay Buddhist by the name of Dhammika, who was virtuous and very fond of charitable acts. He generously offered food and other requisites to the Sangha regularly. Dhammika had many children, and all of them, like their father, were also virtuous and devoted to charity. When he was very ill on his deathbed, he requested the Sangha to sit by his bedside to recite the sutta, Four Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*).

During the recitation, Dhammika saw the sign of destination (*gati nimitta*) of his next rebirth: six fully decorated chariots from the six heavenly realms appeared, wanting to take him to their heavenly planes. He wanted to listen to the sutta and did not wish to be interrupted, so he asked the devas to wait for a while.

But the bhikkhus thought that he was addressing them, so they stopped their recitation. Dhammika's children saw their father's abnormal behaviour and started to cry. After a short while, Dhammika, who seemed to have lost consciousness, regained his senses and saw his children were crying and the monks had gone.

When he was told the reason, he explained that he had addressed the devas who had come with chariots, instead of the monks. to prove that he asked the children to throw a garland into the air, aiming it towards Tusitā heaven. They saw the garland hanging in mid-air, as they could not perceive the chariot since the sign of destination can only be seen by the dying person, as it is produced by the latter's own past kamma. After convincing his children to continue to perform good deeds like he had done, he died and was reborn instantly as a deva in Tusitā heaven.²²

Another good example of habitual kamma comes from the experiential insight of a female yogi at Pa-Auk Meditation Centre. When the yogi

²² Dhammapada Commentary

practiced vipassanā meditation and reached the second insight knowledge, which discerns cause and effect, she saw she was a male dragon in her second previous lifetime. A deva descended from the deva realm to convince the water dragon to undertake five precepts to liberate himself from the animal realm. He did so mindfully kept the precepts that he would not even kill for food, without regard for his life. He just opened his mouth and if by chance any fish swim into his mouth down into his stomach, so be it. Due to the wholesome habitual kamma of abstaining from killing, when the dragon died, he was reborn in the deva realm.

Without death proximate kamma, habitual kamma will produce its result and condition our next life. The best habitual kamma is samatha and vipassanā practice. If we make a habit of keeping our attention on the meditation object, during our dying moment, owing to our habitual practice, naturally our attention will go back to the meditation object. This is wholesome and powerful kamma that will definitely produce good rebirth after death.

One of the best examples of this is of a monk during Buddha's time. Being self sufficient in his meditation practice, his only wish was to retire to the forest with the fervent urgency to become an Arahant. He was so strenuous in his practice that he not only damaged his health badly, he hardly slept at all. Until one day, he ignored the knife-like pains in his stomach, and he just collapsed and died during his walking meditation. Because of his wholesome state of mind at his dying moment, the monk was instantly reborn in Tāvātimsā Heaven. He woke up dressed in his magnificent refinery in front of a grand mansion. A thousand celestial devis rushed to greet their master but the poor monk did not even realised he had left the human state. With some convincing about his new form, he was aghast because his objective was to reach the highest bliss. He flew off immediately, with his thousand companions, and explained his plight to the Buddha.

The samana deva received concise meditation instructions from the Buddha, and immediately became a sotāpanna, stream-enterer, as his paramis could only support him to reach this level.²³ In this case, vipassanā meditation is the habitual kamma that generated the monk's rebirth in Tāvātimsā realm. It also emphasized that if one dies while practicing vipassanā, a very strong foundation is laid for one's liberation in the next life. Therefore, to be sure to get a good death proximate kamma, we should develop good habitual kamma more regularly to the extent that it becomes death proximate kamma.

²³ Samyutta -1 - (Sagāthāvagga Samyutta) Accharā Sutta; Samyutta Commentary 1

Reserve kamma (*katattā kamma*) is the remaining kamma excludes the aforementioned three kammās, namely weighty kamma, death proximate kamma, and habitual kamma, which is potent enough to take on the role of generating rebirth.

The texts give a simile of cattle shed to describe these four kinds of kamma, with respect to order of ripening or bearing result. Suppose that many cattle are kept in a big shed for the night. In the morning the door of the shed is opened to let the cattle go out to pasture. Which one will come out first?

If there is a very strong, big one, this one will of course go first. This is like weighty kamma, which will definitely bear its result in the next life.

If there is no big, strong one, then the one closest to the door will go out first. This is like death-proximate kamma bearing its fruit in the next life.

If one of the cattle has been attentive and noted repeatedly what time the shed is opened, it may move to the door just before it opens and come out first. This is like habitual kamma bearing its result in the next life.

Perhaps a weaker one, who has not been close to the door but suddenly gets pushed there by the others, will come out first. This is like when an unexpected reserve kamma has an opportunity to ripen and bear fruit in the next life.

NEAR-DEATH COGNITIVE PROCESS (*marañāsanna vīhi*)

How does the near-death cognitive process (*marañāsanna vīhi*) occur? (refer chart 11). During the dying moment, one of the kammās performed, perhaps a death-proximate kamma or a habitual kamma, ripens and manifests as one of the nimitta or signs to the dying person's five sense-door or mind door. A meditator at Pa Auk Meditation Centre, saw in her past life, the offering of porridge, flowers and lights at a Pagoda, with happiness. During her dying moment, this kamma ripened and was going to produce its rebirth consciousness in the immediate next life. It manifested as red colour in mother's womb, indicating she would be reborn in the human realm. This was the sign of destination (red colour), which appeared in her last javana near-death cognitive process.

The near-death cognitive process runs as follows: first, bhavaṅga consciousness is interrupted, it then vibrates for one moment, and is arrested. The five-door advertent consciousness arises and turns to the red-color object, followed by eye-consciousness seeing the red-color object, receiving consciousness receiving the red-color object, investigating consciousness investigating the red-color object, and determining consciousness

determining the red-color object, followed by five wholesome javanas, which run swiftly over the red-color object, apprehending it.

Usually sense-sphere javanas arise seven times. But during the near-death cognitive process javana runs only for five conscious moments owing to the weakness of the heart-base. This last javana process lacks original productive kammic potency, acting rather as the channel for the past kamma that is ready to produce rebirth. After five javanas, two moments of registering consciousness and bhavaṅga consciousness may or may not arise.

Then, death consciousness (*cuticitta*), which is also bhavaṅga consciousness, is the last consciousness in one's life, arises. It performs the function of passing away from the present existence. With the ceasing of death consciousness, the life-faculty is cut off. The material aggregate breaks up on the death of a being, the new material and mental aggregate continue arising and passing away as long as the roots that cause its arising remain intact, until the final passing away of an Arahant.

Death is formally defined as the cutting off of the life-faculty (*jīvitindriya*) within a single existence. It is necessary to understand that the subsequent birth is not conditioned by this last death consciousness but by productive kamma (*janaka kamma*).²⁴

REBIRTH

Immediately after death consciousness, without any gap in between, rebirth consciousness arises, making red colour as its object, based on that same wholesome kamma, driven by the force of defilements that have not been cut off (latent ignorance and craving), arises in the human realm.

The function of rebirth consciousness is to link the previous existence to the present existence. But this does not mean that a soul from the past moves to a new body, which is the wrong view of eternalism (*sassata-ditṭhi*). As we know, mind arises and immediately vanishes, and is not the same even for two consecutive moments, let alone, transmigrates from one life to another.

²⁴ Productive kamma has the function of producing the five aggregates (mind and matter) at rebirth, and in the course of life (Pavatti)

During the Buddha's time there was a monk called Sāti who wrongly grasped the dhamma and proclaimed: "It is this same consciousness that runs and wanders through the rounds of rebirth, not another." The Buddha reprimanded him with a discourse on Dependent Origination, showing how all phenomena of existence arise and cease through conditions.

To say that all mind and matter in a previous life have no continuation in the new life, and that they are annihilated when a being dies, is another wrong view of annihilationism (*uccheda diṭṭhi*). Therefore, we should be careful not to get entangled in these two wrong views.

As the Buddha proclaimed; dependent on ignorance arises kammic formations; dependent on kammic formations arise consciousness; dependent on consciousness arises mind-and-matter etc... The mind-and-matter in a new existence is the result of past wholesome and unwholesome kamma rooted in latent ignorance and craving. When we shout loudly in a valley, we hear an echo. This echo is not the original sound, nor is it independent of the original sound. Likewise, a new existence is not the transmigration of the old one, nor is it independent of the old.

With the arising of rebirth consciousness, the matter of the body-decad kalāpa, sex-decad kalāpa, and heart-base-decad kalāpa arise simultaneously with it, and rebirth consciousness arises supported by that heart-base that has arisen simultaneous to it.

After rebirth consciousness, bhavaṅga consciousness arises taking the same object of the last javana process in the previous existence as object (the red-color in the mother's womb). Rebirth consciousness is also bhavaṅga consciousness and both are resultants of the same kamma, they take the same object. After sixteen bhavaṅga consciousness arises, and perishes one after another, the first mind-door cognitive process in one's life arises, taking the new existence (five aggregates) as object. In this cognitive process an attachment develops to the new existence. *The first cognitive process in one's life is craving for new existence, in spite of painful existence.*

One apt example was the case of Queen Ubbari from Assaka- Jātaka (no. 207). When she died, King Assaka was plunged into grief. The Bodhisatta, who had Five Supernatural Faculties and the Eight Attainments, out of compassion, enabled the King to find out where was his beloved consort now. The Queen Ubbari had now become a dung worm owing to her lack of virtuous deeds and her intoxication with her beauty. This dung worm confessed that she had enjoyed numerous sense pleasures with her beloved King in the previous life, but now her memory was confused by rebirth, so the King meant nothing to her, to the extent that she would cut his throat for the blood to smear the feet of her present dung worm husband.

Alas! Even a miserable dung worm craves for such a disgustingly low existence and still clings to its dear life, no matter how pitiful and woeful is the existence. Here we can see how deep rooted is the craving for sensual pleasures and for existence!

Every being desires and craves for existence and this craving is the Truth of the Origin of Suffering, which brings forth insufferable pains. Even a non-returner (*ānāgāmi*) has craving for existence in the Brahma world. This desire or craving (*taṇhā*) is a powerful mental force latent in our mental stream that keeps us going round and round in the cycle of birth and death.

Craving for existence is so deeply entrenched in us that even the Buddha, immediately after his Enlightenment, silently uttered this paean of joy, when he had thus uprooted craving to end his cycle of repeated births.

Thro' many a birth in existence I wandered,
Seeking, but not finding, the builder of this house
Sorrowful is repeated birth.
O' housebuilder²⁵, you are seen. You shall not build anymore houses²⁶
again.

All your rafters²⁷ are broken.
Your ridge-pole²⁸ is shattered
Mind attains the Unconditioned²⁹.
Achieved is the End of Craving.

After the first mind-door cognitive process, an attachment develops to the new existence, bhavaṅga consciousness arises again to preserve the continuity of existence. As long as there is no cognitive process, bhavaṅga consciousness will arise and pass away, flowing on like a stream, until death consciousness arises again. Death consciousness takes the same red color as object as rebirth consciousness and bhavaṅga consciousness. So in one's lifetime, rebirth consciousness, bhavaṅga consciousness, and death consciousness, all take the same object, which is the object of the last near-death cognitive process in the previous life. They are the same bhavaṅga consciousness performing different functions at different times,

²⁵ Craving

²⁶ Body

²⁷ Passions

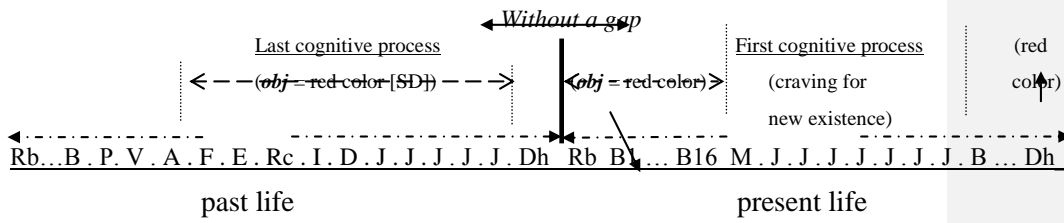
²⁸ Ignorance

²⁹ Nibbāna

just as a woman might be a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a career woman, assuming different roles at different times.

So the stream of consciousness flows on from conception to death, from death to new life, revolving like the wheel of a cart. This is how life goes on again and again in the cycle of births and deaths.

NEAR-DEATH FIVE-DOOR COGNITIVE PROCESS **Chart**
11



Rebirth consciousness arises with its associated mental factors and matter as the result of past kamma:

- 1 consciousness + 33 mental factors
- 30 Matter - (sex-decad kalāpa)³⁰
 - (body-decad
 - (heart-base-decad kalāpa)³²

kalāpa)³¹

³⁰ The sex-decad kalāpa has ten elements: earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty, and the material phenomena of sex.

²The body-decad kalāpa has ten elements: earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty, and body-sensitivity.

³The heart-base-decad kalāpa has ten elements: earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty, and the heart-base.

KEY: Dh = death consciousness; Rb = rebirth consciousness; SD = sign of destination.

P = past bhavaṅga; V = vibrating bhavaṅga; A = arrest bhavaṅga;

F = five door adverting consciousness; E = eye-consciousness;

Rc = receiving consciousness; I = investigating consciousness;

D = determining consciousness; J = javana; B = bhavaṅga.

REBIRTH CONSCIOUSNESS

In the case of a human rebirth, the rebirth consciousness can be a sense-sphere resultant consciousness associated with knowledge or dissociated from knowledge, depending on the person's understanding of the law of kamma or of the three common characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self.

When a person performs a wholesome deed joyfully with the understanding of the workings of kamma, when death approaches, this particular kamma ripens and produces its effect. Then his rebirth consciousness is associated with knowledge and accompanied by joy. Those human beings and devas, whose rebirth consciousness is dissociated from knowledge, has only the two roots of non-greed and non-hatred, without non-delusion (wisdom), are unable to achieve any jhāna or path and fruition in this lifetime, even though they may strive strenuously. This is because their rebirth consciousness lacks the root of non-delusion, which is an essential factor to achieve jhānas or path and fruition. However, they should not feel discouraged and stop practising. No effort is ever wasted. If they strive and practice samatha and vipassanā meditation in this life up to the death moment, then their rebirth consciousness and bhavaṅga consciousness in the next life becomes powerful and associated with the root of sharp wisdom. If they continue their practice in the next life, most probably they will attain Nibbāna swiftly, like the samana deva mentioned previously.

At the first moment of conception, the rebirth consciousness with its associated mental factors arise together with thirty matter, body-decad kalāpa, sex-decad kalāpa, and heart-base-decad kalāpa, as the result of that particular kamma performed in a past life rooted in latent ignorance and latent craving.

According to Abhidhamma, sex is determined at the moment of conception and is conditioned by the individual's inclination or aspiration to be man or woman supported by kamma performed. Some wish to be reborn female, some male, due to their own reasons. For example, Yasodhara, wife of Prince Sidharta, in many of her past lives, performed the various kammas with the aspiration to become the Bodhisatta's faithful female companion, assisting him in fulfilling his ten paramis to Enlightenment.

The bad kamma of committing sexual misconduct may also result in one being born as female or male, since it is causal effect to become the (sex) object of what one formerly so desired.

In one of Venerable Ananda's past life, he went after others' wives. Consequently after death, he suffered intense pain in hell. After long torture in hell, he was reborn as animals for a few lifetimes successively but he was castrated in each lifetime. Then he was reborn as a hermaphrodite, followed by another existence as the object of what he formerly desired, a woman.

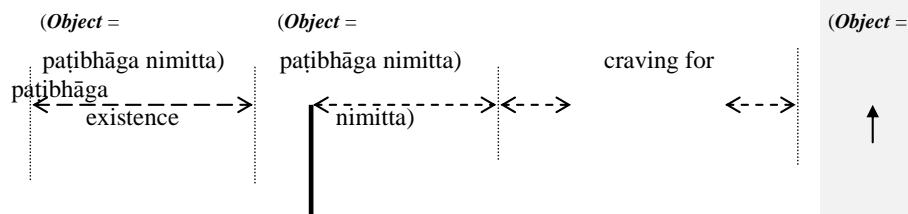
In summary, mind (rebirth consciousness plus thirty-three mental factors) and matter (thirty matter as mentioned above) are thus produced at the moment of conception. This is only for human beings and some devas in conventional truth.

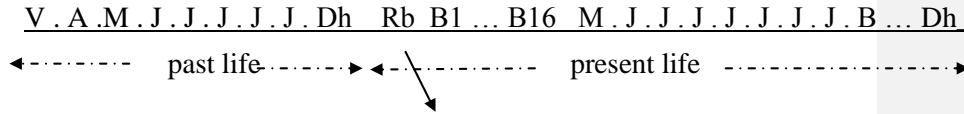
Death and Rebirth for Brahma

For rebirth in the brahma realm there is different mind-and-matter. When a samatha meditator achieves absorption, for example first jhāna, through the practice of mindfulness of breathing or any of the ten kasinas, and is able to enter into first jhāna again during his dying moment, his near-death cognitive process runs as follows:

DEATH AND REBIRTH PROCESS 12

Chart





Rebirth consciousness arises in First Jhāna Brahma plane

with its 33 mental factors and matter

as the result of past kamma:

- 1 consciousness + 33 mental factors
- 39 kamma-born matter - (eye-decad kalāpa)
 - (ear-decad kalāpa)
 - (heart-base-decad kalāpa)
 - (life-nonad kalāpa)³³

KEY: Dh = death consciousness; Rb = rebirth consciousness.

V = vibrating bhavaṅga; A = arrest bhavaṅga; J = javana; B = bhavaṅga.
M = mind-door adverting consciousness.

First, bhavaṅga consciousness vibrates and is arrested, followed by mind-door adverting consciousness, which takes the object of counterpart sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*)³⁴, as sign of kamma. Five javanas follow, running swiftly over the object of the counterpart sign. This is followed by death consciousness, the last mind moment of that existence. Immediately after death consciousness, there arises rebirth consciousness in fine-material realm or brahma existence generated by the kamma of first jhāna absorption, apprehending the same counterpart sign as object.

Rebirth in the realm of Brahma is spontaneous, without the necessity of a womb³⁵. In this case, this Brahma is reborn spontaneously in the plane of first Jhāna with complete faculties. The rebirth consciousness of this Brahma is

³³ *The eye-decad kalāpa has ten elements:* earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty, and the material phenomena of eye-sensitivity.

The ear-decad kalāpa has ten elements: earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty, and ear-sensitivity.

The life-nonad kalāpa has nine elements: earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, nutritive essence, life-faculty.

³⁴ See Samatha meditation section, mindfulness of breathing.

³⁵ According to Buddhism there are four kinds of birth, namely: egg-born beings, womb-born being, moisture-born beings and beings having spontaneous birth.

first-jhāna resultant consciousness associated with thirty-three mental factors and thirty-nine kamma-born matter - the eye-decad kalāpa, ear-decad kalāpa, heart-base-decad kalāpa, and the life-nonad kalāpa. All arise simultaneously and are produced by kamma from the previous life.³⁶ They arise as mind and matter but manifested as brahma in conventional truth. After rebirth consciousness, sixteen moments of bhavaṅga consciousness arise and pass away one after another, apprehending the same counterpart sign (*pañbhāga nimitta*) as object. Then, the first mind-door cognitive process in the new existence arises, craving for existence. After this cognitive process the mind lapses back into bhavaṅga consciousness again to preserve the continuity of existence. The consciousness continues to flow until the arising of death consciousness. The death consciousness of that Brahma takes the same counterpart sign as object and passes away from that existence.

The Five Aggregates are not 'Self'

Mind-and-matter is the same as the five aggregates of clinging. Whether one is born a human being or deva, or hungry ghost or an animal or a brahma in the fine-material realm, it is just a constitution of five aggregates.³⁷ The so-called being is made up of five aggregates or mind-and-matter in the ultimate sense. These five aggregates are objects of clinging.

Thus, at the arising of rebirth consciousness, whether in the human realm or the fine-material realm, the five aggregates are present. Under the influence of ignorance, the ordinary being identifies these forever changing and constantly arising-and-dissolving five aggregates as ‘mine, I, or myself’, thus developing craving and clinging, which brings forth suffering. They regard matter or body as the self; they regard the self as having body; body as being in the self; the self as being in the body. “I am the body,” they say. “Body is mine.” And they are obsessed by this wrong view of self.

Being obsessed by this view, when body alters and changes, then sorrow, grief, lamentation, and despair arise in them. Similarly, they have the same wrong view with the remaining four aggregates. In the Samyutta Nikāya, *Dukkha Sutta*, the "Discourse on Suffering", The Buddha said: “And what, monks, is suffering? The five aggregates of clinging are suffering. What are the five? The materiality aggregates of clinging; the feeling aggregates of clinging; the perception aggregates of clinging; the formation aggregates of

³⁶ The beings in the fine material plane, being sexless, lack the two decads of sex, and though they possess physical forms of the nose, tongue and body, these organs are without sense receptivity.

³⁷ Non percipient beings in fine material realm have only one material aggregate; beings in immaterial realm have four mental aggregates, no materiality.

clinging; and the consciousness aggregates of clinging. This, monks, is suffering.”

Thus, at the rebirth consciousness moment, the Noble Truth of Suffering or in other words, the five aggregates of clinging, is there already. Where does this suffering come from? Why are the aggregates present at the rebirth moment? Since the effects or the five aggregates arise at the very first moment of rebirth, according to the teaching of the Buddha, the Noble Truth of Suffering and the Noble Truth of Origin of Suffering cannot arise together in the same mind moment, therefore the causes (the Noble Truth of Origin of Suffering) cannot be in the present life, but must be from the past life.

According to Dependent Origination (*Paṭicca-samuppāda*) it is due to the kamma rooted in latent ignorance and craving, performed in one of the past lives, that has met with all conditions to produce rebirth consciousness or five aggregates in the present life.

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION (PAṬICCA-SAMUPPĀDA)

As Dependent Origination states, dependent on ignorance arise kammic formations. The characteristic of ignorance is mental blindness or unknowing. Its function is non-penetration or concealment of the real nature of the object. In Abhidhamma, ignorance means not knowing the eight facts of:

- 1) The Noble Truth of Suffering
- 2) The Noble Truth of The Origin of Suffering
- 3) The Noble Truth of The Cessation of Suffering
- 4) The Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering
- 5) The past Five Aggregates
- 6) The future Five Aggregates
- 7) The past and the future Five Aggregates together, and
- 8) About specific conditionality and conditionally-arisen states including kamma and its consequences.

When ignorance arises, it keeps the Noble Truth of Suffering concealed, preventing penetration of the true nature of individual characteristic and function of that truth. Likewise the remaining seven facts are kept concealed. Ignorance prevents the penetration of their true nature. Not seeing the past and future five aggregates as they really are, as the Noble Truth of Suffering, and similarly not knowing craving as the Noble Truth of the Origin of

Suffering, beings perform various wholesome and unwholesome deeds, in order to satiate their desire for the six sense pleasures and their craving for existence as a man or woman, deva, or brahma, thinking it will bring lasting happiness. Most living beings are entangled in sensual pleasures because they see everything through rose-colored glasses.

Dependent on Ignorance arise Kammic Formations **(avijjāpaccayā saṅkhāra).**

According to Abhidhamma, kammic formations constitute:

- 1) *The volition in the twelve types of unwholesome consciousness³⁸*
(Eight rooted in greed, two rooted in anger, two rooted in delusion).
When they are manifested through bodily and verbal formations one commits murder, tortures, steals, commits sexual abuse, slanders, and fraud. Mental formation includes rejecting the law of kamma, jealousy, stinginess, conceit and doubts about the efficacy of The Noble Eightfold Path and so on.
- 2) *The volition in the eight types of sense-sphere wholesome consciousness³⁹.* *(Four associated with knowledge and four dissociated from knowledge).*
They include wholesome body, verbal and mental formations such as generosity, morality, meditation, reverence towards elders and virtuous persons, service, sharing one's merits with others, rejoicing in others' merits, hearing the good doctrine or Dhamma, teaching Dhamma, and straightening out one's views. If someone performs all these good deeds, for example, without understanding kamma and its consequences, then their wholesome kamma is dissociated from knowledge. When this kamma ripens and gives result as rebirth consciousness, that rebirth consciousness will be accompanied by only the two roots of non-greed and non-hatred. Lacking the root of non-delusion, that person will be one who lacks intelligence in that lifetime.
On the other hand, if one practises vipassanā, penetrating ultimate mentality and materiality with their causes as impermanence, suffering, and non-self, their kammās are associated with three wholesome roots of non-greed, non-hatred and non-delusion. When

³⁸ Refer to Appendix 1

³⁹ Refer to Appendix 2

this kamma produces its effect in lives to come, it endows one with sharp penetrating wisdom.

- 3) *The volition in the five types of wholesome consciousness pertaining to the fine-material sphere.* It consists of samatha meditation that has reached absorption in first jhāna, second jhāna, third jhāna, fourth jhāna, and fifth jhāna. These five are merely mental formations.
- 4) *The volition in the four types of wholesome consciousness pertaining to the immaterial sphere.* These are the four immaterial jhānas and are merely mental formations.

When a person is ignorant about the Noble Truth of Suffering, about the past, etc, then one believes the suffering of the round of rebirths to be pleasant and one embarks upon the aforementioned three kinds of formations, with latent craving. Not knowing craving as the Origin of Suffering, one imagines or misperceives the craving to be the cause of pleasure. And owing to one's 'unknowing' about the Cessation and the Path, one misperceives the Cessation of Suffering to be in some particular destiny (such as heaven or Brahma world)⁴⁰, that is not in fact cessation. He misperceives the Path as in animal or human sacrifices; self-mortification and certain rites and rituals like honouring deities etc, which are not in fact the Path to Cessation.

Thus, while aspiring to the Cessation of Suffering, one embarks upon the three kinds of formations, which in reality have extended the suffering in the rounds of rebirth owing to one's ignorance of The Four Noble Truths.

Unknowing there are past and future five aggregates, one wrongly thinks the present aggregates is the only existence. Thus, one engages in various unwholesome kammās or formations to satiate one's desire throughout one's existence, blind of the law of kamma. Not seeing the danger in the indulgence of sense desires, etc, and not seeing how sensual pleasures, eventually breeds great distress owing to the suffering in its change, one performs the three types of formations. Hence, it is said, "Dependent on Ignorance, arises Formations."

The Buddha and the Arahants, too, perform wholesome actions with even greater diligence than ignorant persons, but having attained Arahant Path knowledge, the ignorance which covers the Four Noble Truth and

⁴⁰ When the good kamma that produces the rebirth in those happy realms becomes exhausted, those beings will take rebirth again in different realms according to their kammās, thus it is not the true Cessation of Suffering or the end of the rounds of rebirths.

cravings are rooted out, they have no attachment to the aggregates that form their existence (which is their last). Therefore, their actions, whether physical, verbal, or mental, without ignorance and craving as root causes, do not carry any merit, and are unable to produce any resultant consciousness in the future. Their actions are not called formations, because the necessary volitional activity that clings to present well-being or to future existence is absent.

Dependent on Kammic Formations arises Consciousness

(saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ).

Consciousness here refers to resultant consciousness, it occurs in two ways namely;

- 1) At the rebirth consciousness moment.
- 2) In the course of an individual existence (or continuity).

Because of ignorance and kammic formations in the past life, rebirth consciousness arises in the present life. Once kamma rooted in ignorance and craving is performed, it leaves behind kammic force, to produce its certain result, when favourable conditions and opportunities occur. Just as when a seed is planted and meets with suitable climate, fertile soil, and enough water, it is sure to grow to be a tree. As the result of good or bad kamma performed in a previous life, the stream of consciousness, beginning with rebirth consciousness, arises in the new life, either in the sense-sphere realm, fine-material realm, or immaterial realm, according to the type of kammic formations that mature.

For instance, firstly in the case of a person who is an evil doer, when he is lying on his deathbed, one of his evil kammass done previously, ripened. This then, is ready to produce evil result in the next existence, manifesting as an object of flames or fire (sign of unhappy destiny), at his last near-death mind door cognitive process. First, bhavaṅga consciousness arise twice and cease, one mind door adverting consciousness, five javanas and two registering consciousness arise one after another, apprehending that fire as its object. After that, death consciousness arises and ceases. Without any gap, rebirth consciousness arises in the new existence of the Hell realm, taking that same fire as object, generated by the same evil kamma, driven by the force of defilements that have not been cut off.

In another case, owing to one's maturity of wholesome kamma such as observing the five precepts, a sign of divine mansion etc, appears in the near-death last javana process, at the time of his death. This signifies that the rebirth would take place in the deva realm. When this last javana process comes to an end, death consciousness arises and ceases, immediately that rebirth consciousness, arises in the new existence of deva realm, taking that

sign of divine mansion as object, generated by the same wholesome kamma, driven by the force of defilements that have not been cut off.

Thus it is a mere continuity of consciousness, arising when it has obtained its conditions, comes into the next becoming. It is not a lasting being, and not a soul. And it has neither transmigrated from the past becoming, nor is it yet manifested here, without cause from that. We shall explain further by the normal process of human death and rebirth linking.

In a past existence, a dying man is unable to bear the onset of unmanageable painful feelings during the last moments. He feels anxious, as the life force of his body gradually withers away. Then consciousness which has as its support the heart-base occurs, generated by the force of certain matured kamma, manifest as kamma, sign of kamma or sign of destination. While it is occurring thus, because craving and ignorance have not yet been abandoned, the force of craving pushes it while the formations fling it towards that object (say, the sign of kamma), not knowing the danger inherent in existence. As a continuous process of consciousness (death consciousness to rebirth consciousness), it abandons its former support and gets a new support, like a man who crosses a river by hanging on to a rope tied to a tree on the near bank, not knowing the danger at the other bank, he lets go of the rope, and, gets a further support in another bank, similarly, the new arising consciousness supported by new heart base, establishes itself on same sign of kamma as object, reaching the place of rebirth-linking in new existence.

Thus, one comes to clear understanding, that the consciousness has neither transmigrated here from the past becoming, nor has it become manifested without the kamma, the formations, the pushing force of craving, the object of the last javana process etc. as causes. Hence, it is merely the continuity of process depending on causes and conditions. The stream of continuity is neither identity nor otherness. For if there were absolute identity in a stream of continuity, there would be no forming of curd from milk. And yet if there were absolute otherness, the curd would not be derived from the milk. So, the present being (in conventional truth) is neither absolute identity from the past nor absolutely otherness.

Here, one might ask: if no transmigration is manifested, then after the cessation of the aggregates in this human being (after the death of the person), who experiences the fruit since there is no experiencer? Herein, experiencer is mere conventional truth. The arising of fruit or result consisting of the pleasure and pain is called experience. This is experienced or felt by the aggregates of feeling, (which is one part of five aggregates), in which beings cling to and identify it as 'mine, I, myself' with craving, conceit and wrong

view. Wrongly identified the aggregates of feeling as 'mine, I, my self' brings about the wrong perception and view of a person or deva. In ultimate reality only the aggregates of feeling experienced the fruits, there is no experiencer.

Clinging to the constant arising and perishing of the five aggregates, in other words, mind and matter, is the Noble Truth of Suffering, proclaimed by the Buddha.

Here it may be asked: how do we know that rebirth consciousness actually has kammic formations as its condition? Because there is no kammic result when there is no kamma performed in the past to leave behind kammic force (kammic formations). However, the kammic force may remain dormant for innumerable world cycles until favourable conditions occur.

After rebirth consciousness, other types of resultant consciousness, such as the five types of sense consciousness, eye consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, receiving consciousness, and investigating consciousness, also arise during the course of life. Ignorance and kammic formations, the first two factors in Dependent Origination, are the past life causes, that lie at the root of the present existence. In other words, our previous deluded actions have "created" our present existence.

Who creates all beings? Ignorance and kammic formations create them all. Rebirth consciousness is present-life effect. The casual formula of Dependent Origination states: "This being that arises; because this comes into being, that also comes into being; when this is absent, that too is absent; because this ceases, that too ceases." Dependent on ignorance arise kammic formations; because of kammic formations, consciousness arise.⁴¹

When there is no ignorance, there are no kammic formations; when there are no kammic formations, there is no rebirth consciousness. The Buddha taught Dependent Origination to show that there are only causes and conditions, no self and no Creator.

Dependent on Consciousness arises Mind-and-Matter

(*viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ*).

With the arising of rebirth consciousness, mind-and-matter come into being. Actually mind and matter arise simultaneously with the arising of

⁴¹ Imasmim sati idaṃ hoti; imassuppāda idaṃ upajjati; imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti; imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati....

rebirth consciousness. We say mind-and-matter arise dependent on consciousness because consciousness is the forerunner of coexistent mental factors and matter.

Here, mind is the three aggregates of feeling, perception and formations. They are called *nāma* in Pāli because of their bending (*nāmana*) on to the object. Matter is the four great elements, together with the twenty-four derived materialities.

For the beings in sensual realm whose rebirth are spontaneous (devas and hungry ghosts), at the moment of rebirth consciousness, there arise three mental aggregates and at most seventy matter. These are the decads of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, sex, and the heart-base. Sometimes, the eye, ear, nose, and sex decads might not be found.

To the womb-born beings like humans, there arise (at rebirth) three decads of body, sex, and the heart-base. During the course of existence, the eye, ear, nose decad and so on arise gradually.

The initial arising of material phenomena in human being is invisible to the naked eye. From the moment of conception an embryo develops gradually into a living being (such as a human being, etc.) as follows:

- i. in the first seven days, as embryonic liquid (invisible at first);
- ii. in the second seven days, as a foamy substance;
- iii. in the third seven days, as a clot of blood;
- iv. in the fourth seven days, as a tiny lump of flesh.

Then at the end of the eleventh week, the head and limbs take shape when the four sense bases of eye, ear, nose, and tongue are formed.

At the moment of rebirth consciousness of Brahmas in fine-material realm, there arise three mental aggregates and thirty-nine matter born of kamma (eye, ear, heart base decad kalāpas and life-nonad kalāpa).

In the case of non-percipient beings (*asañña satta*) in the fine-material realm, there arise life-nonad kalāpa as, only matter and no mental aggregates. For beings in immaterial realm, dependent on consciousness three mental aggregates arise, and no matter.

Dependent on Mind-and-Matter arise Six Sense Bases (*nāmarūpapaccayā salāyatanaṅṅ*).

The six sense bases are eye-sensitivity, ear-sensitivity, nose-sensitivity, tongue-sensitivity, body-sensitivity, and the mind base.

Dependent on Six Sense Bases arise Contact
(*salāyatanapaccayā phasso*).

With the existence of the six sense bases, contact with the respective six sense objects take place. Dependent on eye base or eye sensitivity and visible object, eye consciousness arises. Due to the meeting of the three (visible object, eye-sensitivity and eye consciousness), contact arises. The same applies to the other sense bases.

Dependent on Contact arises Feeling
(*phassapaccayā vedanā*).

When the six sense objects impinge on the respective six sense bases, six classes of feeling are formed: feeling born of eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact, feeling born of nose-contact, feeling born of tongue-contact, feeling born of body-contact and feeling born of mind-contact. These six classes of feeling can be experienced as pleasant feeling (*somanassa*), unpleasant feeling (*domanassa*), and neutral feeling (*adukkhamasukha*). Actually, contact and feeling arises simultaneously, because as two of the seven universal mental factors, they must arise together. But in this case they arise in the same mind moment as well as in different mind moments. Dependent on eye-contact, the whole feeling of the eye-door cognitive process arises. Similarly to ear, nose, tongue and body contact. It is this mental factor of feeling that experiences the desirable or undesirable fruit of present or past action. Apart from this mental factor of feeling performing its function of experiencing, there is no soul or self experiencing the result of the action.

Dependent on Feeling arises Craving
(*vedanāpaccayā taṇhā*).

When pleasant feeling arises from contact with the visible object, one experiences happiness and becomes attached or holds on to it dearly. When that pleasant feeling ceases, according to the transient nature of all conditioned phenomena, then unpleasant feeling takes over. One feels the pain and rejects it, longing for pleasant feeling to come back. Thus, craving arises not only because of pleasant feeling but because of unpleasant feeling as well.

The Buddha said feeling is like a bubble, perishing immediately after it forms. Thus, whatever is felt is included in suffering (*yaṃ kiñci vedayitaṃ taṃ dukkhasmiṃ*) because of its impermanence.

There are six kinds of craving: craving for visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and mental objects. Each of these again becomes threefold:

- 1) Craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma-taṇhā*)
- 2) Craving for existence pleasures (*bhava-taṇhā*): associated with the view of eternalism, i.e. thinking the pleasures are permanent.
- 3) Craving for non-existence pleasures (*vibhava-taṇhā*): associated with the view of nihilism, i.e. enjoying the pleasures thinking that everything is annihilated after death.

Ignorance and craving are the two main causes or culprits in the wheel of life that keeps us turning round and round in the cycle of birth and death. Ignorance is shown as the past cause that conditions the present effect, and craving, the present cause that conditions the future effect. But in the ultimate sense, both of them always arise together. Although they arise together, the preceding ignorance is the strong and powerful supporting cause for the arising of the succeeding craving.

Dependent on Craving arises Clinging (*taṇhāpaccayā upādānam*).

Clinging is intense craving. There are four kinds of clinging:

- 1) Clinging to sensual pleasure (*kāmuṇāpādāna*): This applies to lust, greed, delight in and infatuation with sensual desires of the six sense bases.
- 2) Clinging to false views (*diṭṭhupādāna*): The view that there is no giving, no offering, no kamma and its result. It denies morality, virtues, and the path of knowledge, and the absence of a creator.
- 3) Clinging to rites and rituals (*sīlabbatupādāna*): The adherence to the view that purification and attainment of Nibbāna comes through rites and rituals such as self mortification, etc.
- 4) Clinging to doctrine of self (*sīlabbatupādāna*): It is clinging to a self, seeing consciousness as self; feeling as self; perception as self; formation as self; materiality as self.

Dependent on Clinging arises Becoming (*upādānapaccayā bhavo*)⁴²

Under the influence of clinging, one performs actions that leave behind kammic potency. Becoming means the kammic activities, both wholesome and unwholesome, which constitutes kamma that generates rebirth. Just as past kammic formations condition the present life, so becoming conditions future life. Craving, clinging, and becoming, together with latent ignorance and the kammic formations, constitute present causes that lead to future rebirth.

Dependent on Becoming arises Birth
(bhavapaccayā jāti).

Here birth means the first manifestation of any aggregates (from a past becoming) in living beings when they are born in any existence.

Dependent on Birth arises Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief, and Despair. *(jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanass'-upāyāsā sambhavanti).*

Thus, arise the whole mass of suffering.

Once birth has taken place, decay and death will follow suit. Ageing is the basis for the bodily and mental suffering. It is manifested through decrepitude, the loss of teeth, the wrinkling of skin, declining of the faculties, undermining of strength, loss of memory and intelligence, and so on.

Death is breaking up of the aggregates and the falling away from existence. Beings die with pain griping their mind, unable to part from all that they hold dear. In the course of life, one will inevitably meet with sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair, having to separate with loved ones and the loss of one's health and wealth.

Sorrow is a burning in the mind and lamentation is crying out. Pain is bodily pain and grief is mental pain. For those who are gripped by mental pain, they poison themselves, hang themselves, beat themselves, harm themselves in many ways, and undergo many kinds of suffering, thus the whole mass of suffering arises.

This suffering, or the wheel of birth and death, will continue to revolve so long as the root causes of latent ignorance and craving have not been uprooted by the Arahant path knowledge, just as the tree will continue to grow so long as the roots remain intact.

⁴² There are two types of becoming: kamma-process-becoming and rebirth-process-becoming. Here it refers to kamma-process-becoming.

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION IN THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
 (Chart 13)

Dependent Origination shows how causes and effects operate over the three periods of past, present and future. The two factors of Ignorance and Kammic Formations belong to the past; consciousness, mind and matter, six sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging and becoming belong to the present; and birth, decay and death belong to the future.

Although ignorance and kammic formations are said to be the two past causes. Craving, clinging and becoming are also included. These five factors subsequently become the present causes for future effects of birth, etc. They again become the future causes for the next rebirth. So long as they remain intact in the being's mental stream, the cycle of births and deaths will never come to an end.

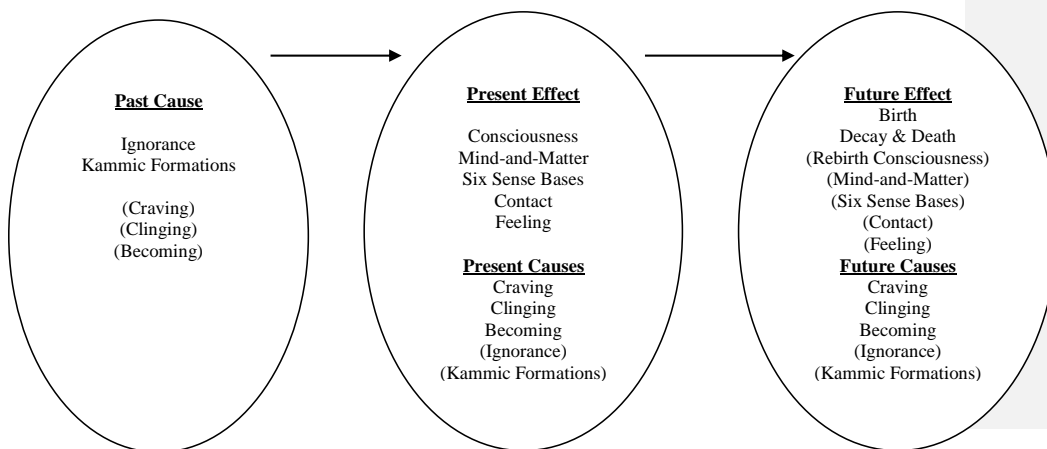
Three Times

Chart 13

The Past
Future

The Present

The

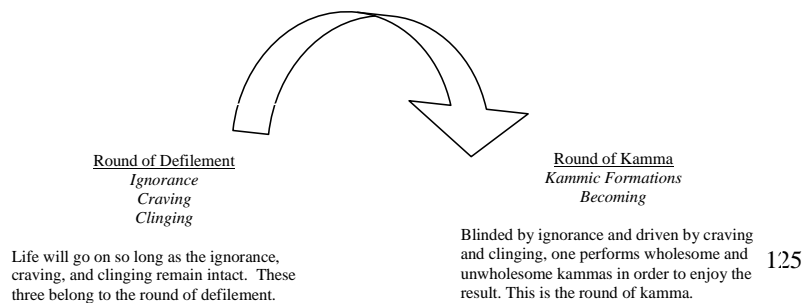


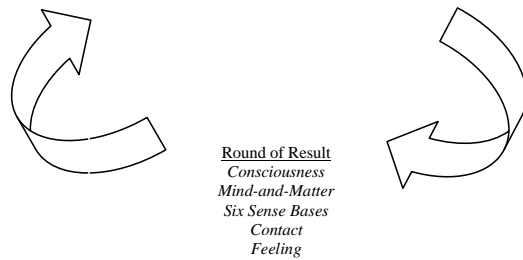
THE TRIPLE ROUNDS (Chart 14)

In another perspective, Dependent Origination should be understood as the triple rounds. Ignorance, craving, and clinging are the Round of Defilements. Kammic Formations and becoming are Round of Kmmas. Consciousness, mind-and-matter, six sense bases, contact and feeling are Round of Results. Thus this wheel of becoming, having a triple round, revolving again and again for ever, as long as round of defilements have not been cut off.

The Triple Rounds

Chart 14





When this kamma matures, it produces its result in the next life starting with Rebirth Consciousness. This is the round of result.

Without knowing Dependent Origination, one cannot understand the real nature of life, the function of cause and effect, and the cause of suffering or how suffering arises. In the Dīgha Nikāya, *Mahānidāna Sutta*, the Buddha said, “Profound, Ānanda, is this Dependent Origination, and profound does it appear. It is through not understanding, not penetrating this law, that this world resembles an untangled ball of thread, a bird’s nest, a thicket of reed, and that man does not escape from the lower states of existence, from the course of woe and perdition, suffering from the round of rebirths.”

There is a stage in meditation when one becomes free from doubt about one’s own existence, which is actually an understanding of Dependent Origination, or of cause and effect, so that no doubts arise about how one arises and passes away as a being. Meditators at Pa Auk Meditation Centre, who reach the second insight knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition, (Dependent Origination), are able to discern their particular kamma performed in the past life, which brought forth rebirth consciousness in this present life as a man or woman.

The following is a real case of a meditator at Pa Auk Meditation Centre. When she reached the second insight knowledge of discerning cause and effect, she tried to find out the cause of her present existence of five aggregates as a woman. Since the resultant five aggregates are arising at the moment of rebirth consciousness, she had to trace back to the past life which caused her rebirth. Initially, she had to discern the present mind-and-matter and going backwards until she saw the mind-and-matter present at the time near death in the previous life, taking the sign of kamma as object. In her

case, she saw the sign of kamma of a man offering a candle to the Pagoda. Then, beginning with the four elements meditation, she further examined the mind-and-matter present while making that offering of a candle. She found that the man was very poor with a wife and son. One day, his family went to one of the pagodas and offered their services to clean the Pagoda surroundings. On completion, he searched around to find something to offer. He found a half-burnt candle on the altar. With great joy, he lighted up the half-burnt candle and offered it to the Pagoda respectfully with strong volition. Having reflected on his state of misery as a man who had to earn a living to support his family, he made a wish for life as a woman in his next existence.

In this case, ignorance (*avijjā*) is the wrong knowledge that “woman” is a reality, not knowing that “woman” is mere mind-and-matter, which is constantly changing. The liking and craving for life as a woman is craving (*taṇhā*). The intense craving and attachment to life as a woman is clinging (*upādāna*). The wholesome volition (*kusala-cetanā*) to offer a candle to the Pagoda is the volitional formation (*saṅkhāra*), and the kamma is the force of kamma that was left behind by that wholesome act.

Blinded by latent ignorance, craving, and clinging, he performed the wholesome kamma (kammic formation) with the wish to be reborn as a woman. His wish was actualized and produced his rebirth as a woman in this present life.

The meditator with concentration and wisdom was able to directly discern with right view how these five past causes - ignorance, craving, clinging, kammic formations, and kamma - produced the rebirth consciousness or five aggregates in this present life. The ability to discern causes and effects in this way is the second insight knowledge called the Knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition (*paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa*).

One may wonder how such a small wholesome act could produce precious human rebirth that is difficult to get. His offering of a candle was supported and reinforced by his prior wholesome act of cleaning the Pagoda with the understanding of kamma and its result. It meant that wholesome javanas arose successively and continuously for a long time. Furthermore, he offered the candle with strong volition. When the volition is strong, the kamma is also equally strong. The great joy he cherished before offering, at the time of offering, and after offering is said by the Buddha to be a superior charity that could also produce a powerful result. He remembered his wholesome act very often. This caused the wholesome javana to arise again and again. Thus, surrounded by favorable conditions, his wishes came true.

Another experience of a meditator at Pa Auk, when he traced back the cause and effect of his second past life, he saw he was a monk at that life. He used to criticize other fellow monks eating meat especially beef. His harsh speech was performed with anger. At the dying moment, this unwholesome kamma matured and manifested as sign of destination, an ox, appeared in his near-death cognitive process, and he passed away. The rebirth consciousness in the new existence apprehended the same ox as object and he was reborn as an ox. This ox is shedding a tear at a time with remorse because it could remember its wrong speech performed in the past that led to its predicament now.

Fortunately, at the ox's dying moment, its wholesome kamma of its previous life as a monk matured. The monk had practiced Four Elements meditation. Based on his purification of virtue, this kamma performed in his second past life produced a rebirth as a man in this present life.

In the same way, the kamma accumulated in the immediate past life does not necessarily produce the rebirth consciousness in the present life. It can be one kamma performed many previous lifetimes ago that has met with all the conditions to ripen now.

Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) explains the conditional and dependent nature of the uninterrupted flux of the manifold mental and material phenomena of existence. It explains how each individual is involved in the wheel of existence, undergoing the round of births and deaths in beginningless saṃsāra.

Such an example was Isidāsī, a nun in Pataliputta, who had attained to Arahantship. She was born into an immensely wealthy household at Ujjeni. Her father was an influential merchant and she was his only beloved daughter. He married her to another wealthy businessman's son. Both families were very happy with such an ideal arrangement. Isidāsī, of course, with her good upbringing, became the role model of ideal wives of the Indian culture of her times. She was respectful to husband, mother and father in-laws and all his relatives attending to all her duties well and appropriately, and was truly a treasure.

In fact her husband had every reason to rejoice to have found such a beautiful and perfect companion. Yet strangely, her husband could not stand her and he went to voice his dissatisfaction and complaints to his parents. The parents were puzzled as they can see Isidāsī's virtues and Isidāsī was just as amazed at the turn of events. No one, even the husband could explain why he could not tolerate her and would not set his eyes on her. Much to the dismay of all parties, nothing could be done but to return Isidāsī to her parents.

This was to Isidāsī, the most humiliating experience that nearly devastated her. Among the father's acquaintances, he found a wealthy and virtuous man who was keen to marry his daughter. Although Isidāsī served her new husband with the utmost love and affection, after barely a month, the same strange pattern occurred again. The second husband lost his affection for her, became irritated by her mere presence and eventually sent her back to her parents with the marriage annulled.

Both Isidāsī and her father were totally at a loss. Shortly after, a mendicant came for alms, and it suddenly occurred to the father to offer the ascetic his daughter. The ascetic accepted the offer of a great mansion and wealth, with beautiful Isidāsī as his wife, which was beyond all his expectations. But strangely after two weeks, he went to his father-in-law and begged him to return his begging bowl and robes because he could no longer continue to stay with Isidāsī under one roof. And he left.

Isidāsī was so miserable that she even considered committing suicide, rather than bearing such humiliation. It so happened on that day, a Buddhist nun came to her father's house on her alms round. Isidāsī was so impressed with the nun's peaceful countenance that she wanted to become nun. After her ordination, she spent seven days in utmost exertion in meditation and achieved Arahantship with three higher knowledges - the recollection of past lives, the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings, and the knowledge of the destruction of defilements.

Through her attainment, she saw the underlying causes behind her marital failures in this life and much else that lay in the dim recesses of saṃsāra. Eight lives ago she was a man, a goldsmith, handsome, rich and full of vigour for life. Intoxicated by his own appearance, this dashing goldsmith had seduced many wives of others, without any regard for decency and morality. He loved the game of conquering other men's wives, without a shred of regard for the hurt or the damage he could cause to the families. All he desired was the thrill, the satisfaction of lust without any responsibilities, commitment or conscience. Thus he conducted his entire life.

Good begets good, evil begets evil. After death, he was reborn in hell, where he experienced a thousand times the hurt and suffering that he had inflicted on others. Because of his ruthlessness in intention and in deed, so in hell he suffered infinitely ruthless punishments, without pity and without mercy, just as he had been, on earth. The special punishment for adulterers and lechers in hell is a compulsory excursion through a forest where every leaf is a sword. They always see a beautiful woman in the distance, and they will run after her and their body will be cut all over by razor sharp blades but

they will never catch the lady. This was suffered by the goldsmith for a long time for his evil kamma.

After hell, having worked through the worst consequences of his misdeeds, he was reborn in animal form, as a monkey. Only seven days of his birth, the monkey leader to prevent future rivalry, bit off the newborn's sexual organs.

He was reborn as a sheep next and became a gelding, unable to satisfy the sexual urge. He lived twelve years in misery until he died. His third animal existence was an ox, castrated, and forced to plough and cart with hardly any rest.

In the next life, after being a licentious womaniser, hell-dweller, monkey, sheep, ox, he arrived at human status – but as a hermaphrodite. As he had been so obsessed with his own sex organ, and those of women, he had both now. Again he could not satisfy his sexual desires, and as he was born in wretched circumstances, he lived a miserable existence and died at thirty.

In the next existence, he was now born as a woman. It is as though desire turns a man into the things he desired - he had now become what was formerly the object of his desires, a woman. The girl was of the lowest caste and her father sold her into slavery, to one of his many creditors. The son of the rich owner fell in love with her and took her as his second wife. Instead of being grateful for her new luxurious life, living in harmony with the first wife, who was virtuous and honourable, she did everything she could to defend her position and status by sowing discord between the husband and his first wife. She succeeded in the attempt.

After that life, she was reborn as Isidāsī. This time, the fruit of her bad actions had been exhausted and therefore she was born as a perfect human female. However because she had driven another woman out of her home and enjoyed taking her place, she now had to suffer the contempt and neglect of three husbands successively. Hence the husbands rejected and despised her as a consequence to her past life's selfish actions. Fortunately, she remained virtuous and was good wife to the three husbands and did not react with aggression or anger. With this virtuous foundation and her matured perfection accumulated in the long saṃsāric journey, after becoming a nun, she made an end of the round of rebirths through attainment of Arahant path knowledge.⁴³

She finally realised the unrestrained craving rooted in ignorance that brought her to commit so much evil, physically, verbally and mentally. The successive births in different painful existence are the result of her previous evil kmmas. The suffering propelled her to want to end the whole cycle of

⁴³ Therigāthā Commentary

samsāra. With her Divine Eye, she understood the interplay of inclinations of her earlier lives and that of her present one and the same holds true for other beings.

By her attainment of Arahant path and fruition knowledge, ignorance comes to complete cessation. When light comes, darkness disappears, so also when knowledge arises, ignorance is removed.

- With the total and final cessation of ignorance, kammic formations cease;
- With the cessation of kammic formations, rebirth consciousness ceases;
- With the cessation of rebirth consciousness, mind and matter ceases;
- With the cessation of mind and matter, the six-sense base ceases;
- With the cessation of the six-sense base, contact ceases;
- With the cessation of contact, feeling ceases;
- With the cessation of feeling, craving ceases;
- With the cessation of craving, clinging ceases;
- With the cessation of clinging, becoming ceases;
- With the cessation of becoming, birth ceases;
- With the cessation of birth, old age, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair do not arise.

Thus, cease the entire mass of suffering.

The whole chain of Dependent Origination breaks down.

The Noble Eightfold Path

In order to bring ignorance to complete cessation, there is only one path, the Noble Eightfold Path. In the first discourse of the Buddha, 'the Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma', *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, Buddha said: “. . . Abandoning both extremes, the Tathāgata has comprehended the Middle Path, which gives rise to vision, insight knowledge, and which tends to peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment, and Nibbāna”.

“What, O Bhikkhus, is that Middle Path the Tathāgata has comprehended which gives rise to vision, insight knowledge, and which tends to peace, higher wisdom, enlightenment, and Nibbāna?”

“The very Noble Eightfold Path - namely, Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right

Mindfulness, and Right Concentration - This, O Bhikkhus, is the Middle Path which the Tathāgata has comprehended.”

The Noble Eightfold Path

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. Right View (<i>sammā diṭṭhi</i>) | } | Wisdom training |
| 2. Right Thought (<i>sammā saṅkappa</i>) | | |
| 3. Right Speech (<i>sammā vācā</i>) | } | Morality training |
| 4. Right Action (<i>sammā kammanta</i>) | | |
| 5. Right Livelihood (<i>sammā ājīva</i>) | | |
| 6. Right Effort (<i>sammā vāyāma</i>) | } | Concentration training |
| 7. Right Mindfulness (<i>sammā sati</i>) | | |
| 8. Right Concentration (<i>sammā samādhi</i>) | | |

This Noble Eightfold Path can be divided into three trainings:

- 1) **Morality training** (*sīla sikkhā*)—which constitutes Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood.
- 2) **Concentration training** (*samādhi sikkhā*)—which constitutes Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.
- 3) **Wisdom training** (*paññā sikkhā*)—which constitutes Right View and Right Thought.

In order to eradicate the defilements, which bring forth suffering, one has to develop wisdom to penetrate into things as they really are, together with their causes, as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self. When the true nature of phenomena unfolds, one sheds the illusion of permanence, satisfactoriness, and substantiality and let go of attachment. The attachment comes from seeing things in the wrong way. However, in order to see things as they really are, one has to develop right concentration first, as Buddha said in Samyutta Nikāya, in *Khandha Vagga*, “Discourse on Samādhi”:

“O, monks, develop concentration. Those who have concentration see things as they really are.”

What “things” do they know as they really are? They know as they really are as the five aggregates or mind-and-matter or the Truth of Suffering. They also know the cause, which is craving. They know the arising of the Truth of Suffering is because of the arising of the causes, and the cessation of the effect of the Truth of Suffering, is because of the cessation of the causes. They also actually know the nature of impermanence (*anicca*),

unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*) of both cause and effect. These dhammas are profound and subtle, hidden in our minds and bodies. It is not easy to penetrate into them without the help of concentration. Just like when you want to penetrate into the invisible cells or bacteria in a glass of water, you need a microscope. Similarly if you want to see through to the real nature of mind and body, you need the help of concentration. So it is important to develop concentration first before the nature of things can unfold.

What is the Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) mentioned by the Buddha, one has to cultivate, that is needed for vipassanā meditation? In Dīgha Nikāya, in the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the “Great Discourse on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness”, in the section on the Four Noble Truths, the Exposition of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering, the Buddha explained the last factor of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Concentration, as first jhāna, second jhāna, third jhāna, and fourth jhāna.

In the *Visuddhimagga*, it is mentioned that access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) together with the four fine-material-sphere jhānas (*rūpāvacara samādhi*) and the four immaterial-sphere jhānas (*arūpāvacara samādhi*), or the eight attainments (*samāpatti*), are known as Purification of Mind (*citta visuddhi*), according to the way of the Seven Stages of Purification. In the Seven Stages of Purification practice, after Purification of Virtue (*sīla visuddhi*) one must try to have Purification of Mind in order to proceed to Purification of View (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*),⁴⁴ as stated by Arahant Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta, in Majjhima Nikāya, The Relay Chariots, *Rathavinā Sutta*. The Arahant Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta answered the question posed by Venerable Sāriputta: "Purification of virtue is for the sake of reaching purification of mind; purification of mind is for the sake of reaching purification of view; purification of view is for the sake of reaching purification by overcoming doubt....."

Dry or pure insight meditators (*suddha-vipassanā yānika*) do not need to develop jhānas, they need to develop access concentration or neighborhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

But concentration training is not possible without moral purity. Moral purity constitutes:

1. *Right Speech*.

- a) One abstains from telling lies.

⁴⁴ *Purification of View* is to discern the personality as a compound of mental and material factors which occur interdependently, without any controlling self within or behind them. This stage is also called the Analytical Knowledge of Mind-and-Matter (*nāmarūpavavathāna-ñāṇa*).

- b) One abstains from backbiting.
- c) One abstains from harsh speech.
- d) One abstains from frivolous talk.

2. *Right Action.*

- a) One abstains from killing out of love for all beings, as all beings love their lives most, and it is not civilised to kill others for one's own benefit.
- b) One abstains from stealing, or taking what is not given, with the understanding that it is unlawful, unjust, and inconsiderate to forcefully take away what other people have earned through hard work.
- c) One abstains from sexual misconduct, so as to respect one's own and others' dignity and health, and to promote the welfare of society.
- d) One abstains from taking intoxicants, which make the mind dull and heedless. If one is intoxicated, one is highly likely to break the rest of the precepts or *sīlas*.

Thus one practices Right Speech and Action for the peace, harmony, and happiness of humankind.

3. *Right Livelihood.* When one abstains from the five specific kinds of wrong livelihood:

- a) From dealing in weapons
- b) From dealing in slaves
- c) From dealing in animals for slaughter
- d) From dealing in poison
- e) From dealing in intoxicants

One practices Right Livelihood, and promotes the peace, justice, non-cruelty, health, and lawfulness of society. Any occupation that requires violation of Right Speech and Right Action is a wrong form of livelihood.

In brief, moral purity should be cultivated through love of oneself and all sentient beings, out of compassion through the understanding of the suffering of others, and with the realisation of kamma as one's true inheritance.

When the purification of conduct, or morality training, is well established, one acquires self-confidence, absence of external fear, lack of self-reproach, and thereby mental serenity, which lay the firm foundation

for success in samatha meditation. In the Dīgha Nikāya, "*Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*", the "Discourse on the Great Passing Away of the Buddha", the Buddha repeatedly said: "This is morality, this is concentration, this is wisdom. Consciousness, imbued with morality, brings great fruit and profit. Wisdom, imbued with concentration, brings great fruit and profit. The mind imbued with wisdom becomes completely free from corruption; this is from the corruption of sensuality, of becoming, of false views and of ignorance."

Thus, to free one's mind from corruption, one needs to take up the threefold training of morality, concentration and wisdom.

SAMATHA MEDITATION

Having taken a stand in virtue, a wise person develops concentration.

Buddha taught forty meditation subjects (*kammaṭṭhāna*) to suit the different temperaments of beings. Here I would like to explain *Ānāpānasati*, Mindfulness of Breathing, as one of the samatha subjects to develop absorption (*jhāna*) concentration. It is the foremost among the various meditation subjects of all Buddhas, some Pacceka Buddhas and some Buddhas' disciples as a basis for attaining distinction and for abiding in bliss here and now. It is the easiest way to learn.

However, before you start, the 'Path of Purification', *Vissudhimagga*, mentioned that it is beneficial to practice Loving-Kindness Meditation (*mettā*) and Mindfulness of Death (*marapānussati*), which are generally useful meditation subjects.

First, you develop loving-kindness to yourself, think of the joys you have had which induce happiness. When one has true loving-kindness for oneself, it becomes easier to develop loving-kindness for others. Then one extends one's loving-kindness to one's teacher, parents, friends, fellow meditators, neighbours, protective devas in the surrounding area, and anyone you wish, with all your love. "May they be free from danger; may they be free from mental suffering; may they be free from physical suffering; may they take care of themselves happily."

You should visualise their happy appearance while radiating loving-kindness to them or remember the kindness they have shown to you, this will easily soften your heart. By giving loving-kindness towards your fellow meditators, they ‘feel’ the positive energy and become easy to live with. With loving-kindness towards the deities in the area, you are protected by them. With loving-kindness towards all human beings, you can go around without creating any dislike in them because they like you. When your mind becomes soft, supple, tender and light through loving-kindness meditation it helps you to calm down and prepare you to practice Mindfulness of Breathing, which is your main meditation subject.

When one becomes lazy and has no interest in striving, it is advisable to practice Mindfulness of Death, reflecting, “I have got to die,” “I can die at any moment,” “Uncertain is life, certain is death,” “I have death as my end,” then, “When death takes place, whatever is mine, delightful and dear, will vanish, will pass away.” Moved by spiritual urgency, you give up improper search, such as the search for wealth, social status, luxury, entertainment, sexual pleasure, and drugs and alcohol, in which there is no promise of lasting happiness, and a sense of urgency and necessity grows in you to live without attachment to worldly pleasures. You are ready to take up the practice seriously with all your might.

These two meditation subjects are called “generally useful” since they are needed generally and are desirable owing to their great helpfulness. You should spend ten minutes for these two meditation subjects before proceeding to Mindfulness of Breathing, *Ānāpānasati*.

ĀNĀPĀNASATI *⁴⁵

The Buddha taught *ānāpānasati* in the "Discourse of Four Foundations of Mindfulness." In the Vesālī Sutta of Saṃyutta Nikāya, He praised it thus: “And, Bhikkhus, this concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practiced much, is both peaceful and sublime, it is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise.” All Buddhas start with the practice of *ānāpānasati* until the attainment of Buddhahood.

To begin with, keep the body erect, so that one’s skin, flesh, and sinews are not twisted, and so the feelings that would arise moment by moment if they were twisted do not arise. Make sure there is no tension in the

⁴⁵ The practice of *ānāpānasati* described here is taught by Ven. Pa Auk Sayadaw.

body, which could be the manifestation of the hidden attachment and resentment toward oneself, certain people or situation. Let go of them. Why keep something which is harmful to you? When the mind is clear of defilements, the body will be at ease.

Start with breathing in and breathing out mindfully, gently fix your attention on the tip of the nose or upper lip where the breath touches. If you cannot find the point where the air touches then just be aware of the breath. The breath is our meditation object, not the touching point. Don't follow the breath up to the top of the head or down into the belly, just gently fix the attention or your mind on the place where the breath touches.

To illustrate this, there is a simile of the gate-keeper: just as a gate-keeper does not examine people entering inside and outside the town, asking, "Who are you? Where have you come from? Where are you going?" but does examine each person as they arrive at the gate, so too, the incoming breaths that have gone inside and the outgoing breaths that have gone outside, are not your concern, but they are your concern each time they arrive at the (nostril) gate itself. If you follow your breath inside and outside the body, you will not be able to develop one-pointedness of mind because your mind is constantly moving up and down.

Breathe naturally. You should not focus too strongly, as that will certainly cause tension in your nose, forehead and head. Your nose will become hard and stiff and your head will become heavy. Excessive effort causes irritation of mind, which in turn causes restlessness of mind. This is a common mistake made by most meditators. The more effort they exert, the more restless they become, until gradually they become discouraged and down-hearted, causing them to lose faith and interest in the process so that they stop halfway without reaching the goal. So be careful not to focus too strongly on the breath. Instead you should just simply be aware of the breath.

The effort should be directed to control the mind not to drift along with fantasy, planning, reasoning, doubt, regret, and so on, and overshoot the object of the breath. Also, avoid paying attention to the cold or heat of the breath, which is the characteristic of the fire element. If one pays attention to this, it becomes Four Elements Meditation, not *ānāpānasati*. Just breathe naturally without any strain in your mind and body. Let go of all expectations. Expectation makes the mind tense up. Rest your mind in the breath. If you find it difficult to concentrate on the breath at the beginning, don't feel discouraged, it is natural for our mind to wander here and there. Just as the Buddha had said, "The mind wanders at will."

To overcome restlessness, the *Visuddhimagga* encouraged you to use the counting method. You should count after the end of each breath slowly like this: “In-breath, out-breath, one; in-breath, out-breath, two; in-breath, out-breath, three; . . . in-breath, out-breath, eight.” You should count up to eight but not exceeding ten. If you count more than ten, your mind will turn its attention to the number, not the breath. You should determine that you will not let your mind drift or wander at each set of eight. You should only be aware of the breath, without any tension. Be careful not to exert too much effort while watching the breath. Excessive effort causes agitation of the mind.

When your mind becomes calm after half an hour or an hour, you should give up counting and proceed to the next stage. When you are breathing in a long breath, you know that it is a long in-breath; breathing out a long breath, you know that it is a long out-breath; breathing in a short breath, you know it is a short in-breath; breathing out a short breath, you know it is a short out-breath. What is long or short here? It is the duration of time. If it takes a long time to breathe then it’s a long breath and if it takes a short time to breathe then it’s a short breath. You should not try to make the breath long or short or else you will get tired. Let it happen naturally. Just be aware if the breath is long or short, but concentration must still be on the breath that is touching the nostril or upper lip.

Do not follow the breath inside the body or outside the body. When you are concentrating on the breath, sometimes you may feel hot tingling or pain in your leg or some other sensation that is more prominent than the breath, but you should not shift your attention to that; if you do so your concentration on the breath breaks. For *ānāpānasati*, the breath is your only object. Except breath, you shouldn’t pay attention to any other object.

In the midst of practice, one is sure to face some obstacles that block the progress. When the obstacles occur in the mind, the mind becomes dark, unworkable, unwieldy, and attaining jhāna is utterly impossible. What are they? They are the five hindrances (*Nīvaraṇa*) of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry and doubts.

1. Sensual Desire (*kāmacchanda*)

This is the desire to get the five sense objects, such as pleasant visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Pleasant visible objects include the sight of the opposite sex, television programs, movies, or dances and plays. Some people have attachment to certain kinds of food. If they cannot get the

smell and taste they want, the mind becomes agitated or irritated due to unfulfilled desire, based on sensual desire. Longing for pleasant, soft and comfortable touch when one is devoid of them, can be disturbing as well. The cultivation of contentment is necessary here.

If one has strong attachment to the opposite sex, one's mind will linger on him or her frequently, rather than settle down on the breath. How can we get rid of the attachment to people, or the opposite sex, during meditation practice? When that desire or lust arises, one should reflect on the impurities of the thirty-two parts of the body of that person. For example, one contemplates the repulsiveness of head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, urine, faeces, and so on, from the head down to the soles and from the soles up to the head, again and again. Eventually, one's desire for the opposite sex will subside. Then one's mind will become calm, stable, and can continue to concentrate on the breath again.

And if one has desire for inanimate things, one should pay attention to the impermanent nature of all conditioned phenomena. Whatever phenomena they are, whether good or bad, they will change, vanish, and pass away. Reflecting thus, one's attachment, craving, and clinging to that object will gradually cease. This is how one should overcome sense desire towards inanimate things and animate things, by wise reflection.

The Buddha compared the sense desires to water of different colors. In such water, one cannot see one's own reflection; so also, when one is obsessed by sense desires, one cannot see one's own benefit, or the benefit of others, or the benefit of both.

2. Ill Will (*Byāpāda*)

Ill will is resentment, agitation, hatred, or dissatisfaction towards people or one self or towards objects or certain situations. How does anger arise toward certain people in the meditation practice? In a meditation retreat, when your mind is well concentrated on the breath, a person who sits beside you keeps on coughing, burping, walking in and out, and changing his posture frequently, creating a lot of noise, your mind gets distracted and you become angry at that person. Because of the arising of the anger, your mind is no longer fixed on the breath.

At this moment, you should be aware of your anger and the cause of anger. If possible, replace your anger with loving-kindness; may this person be free from physical suffering, may he well and happy. If you can radiate loving-kindness in such a way, instead of anger arising, goodwill is developed

towards that person, and your mind becomes gentle. Turning back to the breath, you can fix your attention well on the breath object. Some people get irritated by external noise because they pay attention to it, rather than on the breathe object. It is because you keep on paying attention to the noise that it becomes disturbing.

Sometimes you may remember the wrong others have done to you and the mind gets agitated. Then, you should practise forgiveness to let go the resentment. You should also reflect that it may be the result of your past evil kamma and thereby accept it with equanimity.

At a time, the anger may arise towards yourself. The more you exert effort, the more restless you become, owing to expectation and excessive effort. So you get even angrier at yourself. Be kind and gentle to yourself. Let go of expectations. You should get rid of this anger by treating the cause. Whenever anger arises, the mind becomes hot, like boiling water. How can calmness and concentration developed by a 'hot mind'.

The Buddha compared anger to boiling water, just as in boiling water one cannot see one's own reflection, so when the mind is obsessed by anger or irritation, one cannot see one's own benefit, nor the benefit of others, nor the benefit of both. This anger is an unwholesome mental state that blocks the progress of your meditation. You should be aware it when it arises. Recognise it and let go of it or change it to the wholesome mental state of loving-kindness.

3. Sloth and Torpor (*Thina-middha*).

Sloth and torpor is a dull or sluggish state of the mind, a lack of driving power. When sloth and torpor occurs, it is manifested as dropping the head, nodding, the body swaying, and cannot see, cannot grasp the breath at all. Usually sloth and torpor arises because of a lack of interest in the meditation object. If one has no interest in the breath, then very soon sloth and torpor will obsess one. Why do meditators have a lack of interest in the meditation object, or the breath? This is because they do not understand the benefit of Mindfulness of Breathing or of concentration training. Concentration is the proximate cause for wisdom. Wisdom based on deep concentration penetrates into things as they really are. And this Mindfulness of Breathing had to be practised by all bodhisattas, as we call the Buddha-to-be before he gained enlightenment. So it is a very great task, a worthy task. To undertake the great task, you need superior effort, not inferior one. A person who has effort never shrinks from the task when confronted with a job, requiring great energy.

How to overcome sloth and torpor when it arises? One can reflect some inspiring stories of how monks or meditators aroused their effort to overcome all their difficulties. During Buddha's time, there was one man who, after understanding the hallucination of life, renounced all his property and became a monk. He practised very hard in meditation. He was afraid he would fall asleep during sitting meditation. So in the middle of the night, he would walk without sleep - so much so that his soles were bleeding, and he could not continue his walking meditation. He started to crawl on the ground. One of the hunters did not know it was a human being, he thought it was an animal. So the hunter pierced his back with a spike, which caused severe pain in him. Even then, he did not give up, nor relax his effort. Such heroic effort should be able to inspire us and uplift our mind. When our minds are obsessed by sloth and torpor, apart from recollecting the inspiring story of this monk, we should also recollect the benefits of concentration training.

The Lord Buddha prescribed sequential means to overcome sloth and torpor. The first is not to pay attention to the thought, causing the state of drowsiness. If one does not succeed with it, one may reflect upon the excellence of the Teaching to stimulate the dull state of mind. If it fails, one should pull one's ears; rub one's limbs; get up from one's seat mindfully and refresh one's eyes with cold water; look around in all directions and upwards to the stars...one should give attention to the perception of light and cultivate a mind that is full of brightness. Or else, one should walk up and down, being aware of going to and fro. Then, by doing so, it is possible that one's drowsiness will vanish.

If none of these methods prove helpful, the last antidote suggested by The Buddha, is to just lie down, rest or sleep for a short while, keeping in mind the thought of rising, because sometimes sloth and torpor may arise owing to physical fatigue and deprivation of sleep. Overeating and following the wrong diet may cause drowsiness too. When you come to a meditation retreat, you should eat moderately, just enough to sustain the body.

The Buddha compared sloth and torpor to water covered with moss. In such water one cannot see one's own reflection; similarly, when the mind is obsessed with sloth and torpor, one cannot see one's own benefit, nor the benefit of others, nor the benefit of both.

4. Restlessness and Remorse (*Uddhacca-kukkucca*)

Restlessness is like a heap of ashes, when hit by a stone it flies up and is scattered everywhere. It is a scattered, distracted state of mind. As soon as we try to focus on a meditation object like breath, we find that our mind

very swiftly loses its power of attention. Restlessness drives our mind from thought to thought. The mind is like a monkey jumping here and there without stopping. This is because our mind has long been indulging in sense pleasures. Now that we are instructed to focus our mind on a single object, the breath, in which there is no enjoyment at all in the beginning, our mind may start to dash to and fro because it no longer gets the pleasure it was formerly used to. Just like a fish that has been brought out of the pond and put on dry ground, jumping and struggling here and there, wanting to go back to the water where it used to live, so also the mind. So we need persistent effort and perseverance, taking our mind back again and again from the external world to the breath, anchoring our mind there with the rope of mindfulness.

If we let our mind go according to its will, nothing can be accomplished. We need to tame our mind. It is like taming a calf. When you want to tame a calf, you tie it with a rope to a post. In the beginning, the calf will run here and there, wanting to be free. But the rope is firmly tied to the post. It's not easy for the calf to get free from it. After struggling for some time, the calf gets tired and doesn't want to move anymore, so it becomes quiet and lies down in one place. Similarly, if you want to tame your mind, you should tie your mind with the rope of mindfulness to the post of the breath. If you can do so, gradually the mind will become calm.

Excessive effort also causes restlessness. When it happens, check your mind. "Am I too excited? Do I expect something to happen? Am I anxious that the breath is not clear? Expectation and anxieties lead to restlessness. Let go of them. When the restlessness is too overwhelming, you should be mindful of it with calmness and without giving in to anger. Temporary changing the meditation subject may help.

Remorse is also one of the hindrances blocking meditation progress: we may remorse over the wrong deeds we had done in the past, and over the good deeds we did not do. Before we came to know the teaching of the Buddha, we may have killed; stolen or taken what is not given; have sexual intercourse freely or lied in order to cheat people and have indulged in intoxicants or drugs that made our mind dull and heedless. Having known the teachings of the Buddha, we understand that all these are unwholesome deeds, which can produce their bad consequences when their time ripens. So we keep on remorse over the bad deeds we have done.

Sometimes we remorse over the good deeds we have not performed. We felt sorry we did not start the practice early. Now the body is too old and weak to sit long without trouble. Each person has different things to remorse.

Remorse itself is an unwholesome mental state, which will produce its bad result as well. If we allow remorse re-occur in our mind again and again, then it will come up very often to the mind, being disturbed by it, the mind cannot settle on the breath. The best way to overcome remorse is to acknowledge its unwholesomeness and let go of it.

The Buddha compared restlessness and remorse to agitated water whipped up by the wind, in which one cannot see one's own reflection. Likewise, when the mind is filled with restlessness and remorse, one cannot see one's own benefit, nor the benefit of others, nor the benefit of both.

5. Skeptical Doubt (*Vicikicchā*)

Skeptical doubt is doubt about the teachings of the Buddha, the enlightenment of the Buddha, or the practice of concentration. When we are instructed to concentrate on the breath we may think, "What is the use? What is the benefit to just be aware of the breath? "How can I attain absorption by just concentrating on the simple breath?" If our mind is obsessed with this skeptical doubt, we will not commit ourselves to the course of spiritual training, let alone succeed in it. Thus, we should begin the practice with the faith. When doubt arises, we should approach the teacher or any experienced meditator, or to listen to relevant Dhamma to clarify the arising doubt. The Buddha compared doubt to muddy water: just like in muddy water one cannot see one's own reflection, so also when the mind is obsessed with skeptical doubt about the practice, one will not exert one's effort and one cannot see one's own benefit, as well as the benefit of others and the benefit of both.

Thus, it is important for meditators to understand how the five hindrances block or obstruct their progress. When they arise one should try to apply the antidote to overcome them. After the five hindrances are surpassed, the mind will concentrate well on the breath. The mind is free from all mental corruption, like greed, hatred, delusion, pride, meanness, stinginess, cruelty, restlessness, and so on. When the mind is thus free from all mental corruption and is continuously fixed on the breath for half an hour, this is higher wholesomeness.

When you find you are able to concentrate well, and yet no *nimitta* (sign of concentration) appears, you should proceed to the next stage. You should be aware of the whole breath continuously from the beginning to the end. This does not mean following the air in and out of the body. Just know the whole breath, which is touching at one place on the nostril or upper lip, from the beginning to the end, with the awareness remaining on the tip of the nose.

If you are able to concentrate in this manner for one or two hours, then the nimitta may arise.

However, you should proceed to the next stage, whether the nimitta arises or not. At this stage you make a mental wish, “May my gross breath be calm.” Incline your mind to it. Gradually the breath will become smooth, subtle, and calm by itself. You must not purposely make the breath calm or subtle. If you do so, then gradually you will gasp for air and become tired. If the breath becomes subtle by itself and the mind is calm on it, most meditators, by the power of concentration, do not feel the nose or body; there exists only the breath and the mind that is meditating on it. At that moment there is no “I” or “he,” only the concentrated mind fixed on the breath. If the mind is calm and concentrated on it for an hour then for that period all the worry, anxiety, agitation, depression, and unwholesome states of mind are cut off temporarily. It becomes higher wholesomeness (*kusala*). This state is rather close to Access Concentration (*upacāra samādhi*).

Due to present effort in concentration and past perfections (*pāramīs*), the nimitta may arise at this stage. If the nimitta appears, you should not immediately shift your attention to it, but continue to be aware of the breath.

Just before the nimitta appears, a lot of meditators encounter difficulties; mostly they find that the breath becomes very subtle and is not clear to their mind. If this happens you should keep your awareness at the place where you last noticed the breath and wait for it there. Do not be perplexed that your meditation has regressed. Every other meditation subject apart from Mindfulness of Breathing gets more evident as one goes on giving it one’s attention. But Mindfulness of Breathing, when continued attention is given to it, the breath becomes more peaceful and more subtle. Hence, strong mindfulness on the breath and understanding are necessary at this stage.

Do not try to breathe loudly to make the breath clear. If you do that you will not develop further concentration. Just be aware of the breath as it is, and if it is not clear simply wait for it at the place where you last noticed it. You should reflect that you are not a dead person, you are in fact breathing, and it is because of the weakness of your mindfulness that you are unable to be aware of the subtle breath. You will find that as you apply your mindfulness and understanding in this way, the breath will appear to you again. At this stage the nimitta can appear.

At first it appears as a grey color, like a puff of smoke, near the nostrils. This is the preparation sign (*parikamma nimitta*). Usually it is not stable in the beginning, it shakes or disappears owing to the instability of concentration. When the nimitta appears, you should not shift your awareness from the breath to the nimitta immediately; if you do, you will find that it

disappears. You should only concentrate on the breath. When concentration becomes deeper or stronger, the nimitta changes to a white color, like cotton wool. This is the learning sign (*uggaha nimitta*). It is not bright yet.

The nimitta can appear to different people in different ways due to different perceptions. It can look like a white thread, or a long white light, or a star, a wreath of flowers, a stretched-out cobweb, a chariot wheel, a cloud, or white cotton wool. It can appear to some as covering the whole face or like the sun or the moon or a pearl or red ruby or yellow in color. Even though *ānāpānasati* is only one meditation subject, it can produce various types of nimitta depending on the individual's perception.

At this stage, you should guard the nimitta carefully as a king's chief queen guards the child in her womb. It is important not to give attention to its color or play with your nimitta by intentionally changing its shape or appearance. If the color and shape change very often the concentration will regress gradually. This is because the meditator's perception changes. Whenever it changes, his object thereby also changes. He then has different objects. The mind no longer sinks into the single object. So the meditator should not pay attention to the color and shape of the nimitta. He should pay attention to it only as an *ānāpāna-nimitta*.

If you find that the nimitta is stable and your mind on its own naturally becomes fixed on it, just leave your mind on the nimitta. Sometimes you will find that the nimitta, like a magnetic force, pulls your observing mind inside it. This is good. You should just sink your mind into it. If your nimitta appears far away in front of you, do not pay attention to it, as it will probably disappear. If you do not pay attention to it and simply continue to concentrate on the place where the breath touches, you will find that the nimitta will come and stay under the nostrils.

If your nimitta comes and appears at the place where the breath touches or if sometimes you find it moving in and out along with the breath, and it appears as if the nimitta is the breath and the breath is the nimitta, it is excellent, you should just be aware of the nimitta, and forget the breath. In this way, by changing your attention from the breath to the nimitta, making it grow and improve with repeated attention, you will be able to make further progress.

As you fix your mind on the nimitta for one hour or two hours, you should find that it becomes clear, bright, and brilliant, like a crystal or a diamond or a morning star. This is called the counterpart sign (*pañbhāga nimitta*). At this point you should determine and practise to keep your mind

fixed on the paṭibhāga nimitta for one hour, two hours, or three hours continuously.

At this stage you will reach either *upacāra* or *appanā* concentration. *Upacāra* concentration is the access concentration close to and preceding jhāna. *Appanā* concentration is the absorption or jhāna concentration.

Both of these types of concentration have the paṭibhāga nimitta as their object. The difference between them is that in *upacāra* concentration, the jhāna factors are not completely developed to full strength. It is because they are not strong that when access concentration has arisen, the mind first makes the paṭibhāga nimitta its object and next falls into bhavaṅga, going back and forth. For this reason, during *upacāra* concentration, bhavaṅga mind states still occur and one can fall into these states. Just like a small child who is too weak to stand by himself, when lifted up and stood on his feet will fall down again and again, so in the same way, at the access concentration stage, the jhāna factors are not yet fully developed. Due to the weakness of mindfulness, the mind may fall into bhavaṅga, without the awareness of the paṭibhāga nimitta. He feels peaceful and in his mind, it seems that everything has stopped, and that he knows nothing, and he may even think this is Nibbānic state. In reality at this time there is still bhavaṅga consciousness arising and passing away successively. As mentioned before, bhavaṅga consciousness takes the object of near-death cognitive process of the previous life, but the meditator does not have sufficient skill to discern this, because of the subtlety of these bhavaṅga mind states. When he reaches the second insight knowledge of Discerning Cause and Condition, he will then, see and understand the object of the bhavaṅga consciousness.

To avoid dropping into bhavaṅga mind state and to make further progress, you need the help of the five controlling faculties of faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding to balance the mind and fix it on the paṭibhāga nimitta. You should have the faith that *ānāpānasati* can lead you to the attainment of jhāna; efforts should be raised to keep the mind on the paṭibhāga nimitta again and again; mindfulness should be present in order not to forget the paṭibhāga nimitta; and concentration should be fixed on the paṭibhāga nimitta, not going to other objects; and understanding penetrates into the paṭibhāga nimitta.

When these five controlling faculties are sufficiently developed and balanced, then concentration will go beyond *upacāra* up to *appanā*

concentration, or absorption. The jhāna factors are strong in absorption. It is because they are strong that when absorption consciousness has arisen, the stream of jhāna javana flows on uninterruptedly for a long time, just as a healthy man, after rising from his seat, could stand for a whole day.

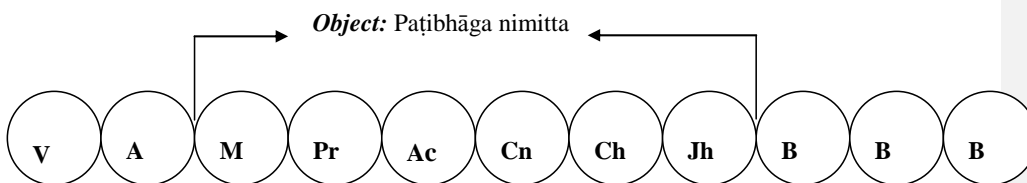
The jhānas are so called because they closely contemplate the object and because they burn up the adverse states opposed to concentration. The adverse states are the five hindrances.

When you reach jhāna in this way, your mind will continuously know the *paṭibhāga nimitta* without interruption for one hour, two hours, three hours, even all night. You cannot hear sounds, nor will you fall into the bhavaṅga mind state. Apart from the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, you know nothing. Some meditators may say that they can hear sounds during absorption. This is not possible. Why? Jhāna cognitive process takes *paṭibhāga nimitta* as object; ear door cognitive process takes sound as object. When ear-door cognitive process arises, jhāna cognitive process cannot arise. You may not realize that at that time, you have emerged from jhāna for a split second and re-entered into jhāna again. Unable to discern that jhāna cognitive process and ear-door cognitive process are occurring alternately, they proclaim that one can hear sounds during absorption.

How does the jhāna cognitive process occur? When one first attains jhāna, the jhāna cognitive process, *vīthi* runs as follows:

FIRST ATTAINMENT OF JHĀNA

Chart 15



Key: Pr = preparation; Ac= access; Cn = conformity; Ch = change-of-lineage; Jh = Jhāna;
B = bhavaṅga;

When the *paṭibhāga nimitta* appears at the mind-door, bhavaṅga consciousness vibrates and is arrested. Then mind-door adverting consciousness adverts the mind to the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, followed by

- 1) *preparation*, which prepares for the attainment of jhāna;
- 2) *access*, which arises in proximity to the jhāna;
- 3) *conformity*, which harmonizes the previous consciousness with the higher consciousness of jhāna; and
- 4) *change-of-lineage*, which cuts the lineage of the sensual world and ushers in the higher jhāna lineage. Immediately afterward, the fine-material-sphere wholesome first-jhāna consciousness arises, only once as absorption javana, taking the same *paṭibhāga nimitta* as object.

There are thirty-three mental factors associated with first jhāna consciousness.

1. *Contact*: causes first jhāna consciousness together with associated mental factors and *paṭibhāga nimitta* to impinge.
2. *Feeling*: experiences the bliss of *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
3. *Perception*: makes a sign, “This is *paṭibhāga nimitta*.”
4. *Volition*: urges the consciousness and associated mental factors in acting upon *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
5. *One-pointedness*: fixes the consciousness and associated mental factors into *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
6. *Life-faculty*: sustains the vitality of the consciousness and associated mental factors.
7. *Attention*: directs the consciousness and associated mental factors towards *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
8. *Initial application of mind*: places the consciousness and associated mental factors on *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
9. *Sustained application of mind*: continuously sustains the consciousness and associated mental factors on *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
10. *Decision*: makes a decision, “This is *paṭibhāga nimitta*.”
11. *Effort*: the effort to support the consciousness and associated mental factors to know the *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
12. *Joy*: being joyous of *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
13. *Desire*: desire to concentrate on *paṭibhāga nimitta*.

14. *Faith*: taking *pañbhāga nimitta* as object with faith in attainment of *jhāna*.
15. *Mindfulness*: makes the consciousness and associated mental factors sink into *pañbhāga nimitta*, not forgetting *pañbhāga nimitta*.
- 16,17. *Shame and Fear of wrongdoing*: in the attainment of *jhāna*, there is no desire to commit any wrong doings. This wholesome attitude is called shame and fear of wrong doing.
18. *Non-greed*: no attachment to *pañbhāga nimitta* as “mine” when the mind is focusing on *pañbhāga nimitta*.
19. *Non-hatred*: the nature of not being harsh or rough is clear when one sees *pañbhāga nimitta*.
20. *Neutrality of mind*: balances the consciousness and associated mental factors so they can function together, preventing any excess or deficiency.
- 21,22. *Tranquillity of consciousness and of mental factors*: tranquillity of consciousness and associated mental factors at the time of taking *pañbhāga nimitta* as object.
- 23,24. *Lightness of consciousness and of mental factors*: the ability to take *pañbhāga nimitta* lightly and swiftly.
- 25,26. *Malleability of consciousness and of mental factors*: pliancy of consciousness and associated mental factors in taking *pañbhāga nimitta* as object.
- 27,28. *Wieldiness of consciousness and of mental factors*: adaptability of consciousness and associated mental factors in taking *pañbhāga nimitta* as object.
- 29,30. *Proficiency of consciousness and of mental factors*: the consciousness and associated mental factors become skillful with *pañbhāga nimitta* as object.
- 31,32. *Rectitude of consciousness and of mental factors*: uprightness of consciousness and associated mental factors when taking *pañbhāga nimitta* as object.
33. *Wisdom faculty*: Penetrate into *pañbhāga nimitta*.

Thus there are thirty-three mental factors and one first *jhāna* absorption consciousness at the attainment of first *jhāna*. In total there are thirty-four mental phenomena.

When one attains first *jhāna* for the very first time, only one *javana jhāna* consciousness moment arises because of the lack of repetition. With the dissolution of this first *jhāna* consciousness, *bhavaṅga* consciousness flows on again as usual. With subsequent absorption, because of the skill one has

mastered, one can enter into jhāna for a longer time, in which case the javana jhāna consciousness arises successively until one emerges from the jhāna, after which the mind lapses into bhavaṅga consciousness again.

If the jhāna consciousness arises for one hour, thousands of billions of wholesome consciousness arise and pass away, and superior wholesome kamma is abundantly accumulated.

When your mind is fixed on the paṭibhāga nimitta for one or two hours successively for one or two days then one should, after emerging from it, turn the attention to the heart area to look for bhavaṅga mind-door. Bhavaṅga mind-door is bright and clear like a mirror. If you can find the bhavaṅga mind-door, you will also see the same paṭibhāga nimitta that appears under the nostrils, appear there. At that same place of the heart area, you should try to look at the five jhāna factors of initial application of mind (*vitakka*); sustained application of mind (*vicāra*); joy (*pīti*); happiness (*sukha*); and one-pointedness of mind (*ekaggatā*). At first, one discerns these jhāna factors one by one.

- 1) ***Vitakka (initial application of mind)***: the directing and placing of the mind onto the object of the *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
- 2) ***Vicāra (sustained application of mind)***: the sustained keeping of the mind on the object, the *paṭibhāga nimitta*, or keeping the mind anchored to that object. *Vitakka* is the first striking of the mind on the object, like a bee diving towards a lotus; *vicāra* is continued pressure, like the bee's buzzing above the lotus after it has dived towards it.
- 3) ***Pīti (joy)***: Joy, interest, or liking for the *paṭibhāga nimitta*. Its' function is to refresh the body and the mind or to pervade and thrill with rapture.
- 4) ***Sukha (happiness)***: Pleasant feeling or happiness associated with experiencing the *paṭibhāga nimitta*.
- 5) ***Ekaggatā (one-pointedness)***: One-pointedness of mind or fixing the mind firmly on the *paṭibhāga nimitta*. When it is well-developed it is known as concentration, samādhi.

Eventually, you will be able to discern them all together at once. When it has been attained in this way, the meditator must discern the mode in which he attained it. When the jhāna is lost, the meditator will be able to recapture those modes he used and re-attain the jhāna, or while familiarizing himself with it, he will be able to repeat that jhāna again and again.

After that, you should practice the five masteries of the first jhāna. They are:

- 1) ***Mastery in adverting***: being able to advert to the jhāna factors after emerging from jhāna.
- 2) ***Mastery in attaining***: being able to enter jhāna whenever you wish.
- 3) ***Mastery in resolving***: being able to stay in jhāna for as long as you have determined to stay.
- 4) ***Mastery in emerging***: being able to emerge from the jhāna at the time you determined to emerge.
- 5) ***Mastery in reviewing***: being able to review the jhāna factors from which one have just emerged.

When you become skillful in these five masteries, you should proceed to second jhāna. But if you do not master the first jhāna proficiently and try to go to higher jhānas, you will miss the first jhāna as well as being unable to attain the second jhāna. So you lose both jhānas. To achieve second jhāna, you need to enter into the first jhāna, emerge from it, and reflect on the faults of the first jhāna and the advantages of the second jhāna. You should consider that the first jhāna is close to the five hindrances, and the jhāna factors of initial application of mind and sustained application of mind in the first jhāna are gross. They make the mind less calm compared with the second jhāna, which is without these two jhāna factors. With the wish to remove these two jhāna factors and be left with just joy, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind, you should again concentrate on the *pañbhāga nimitta* continuously. In this way you will be able to attain the second jhāna, possessed of those three factors: joy, happiness, and one-pointedness of mind.

You should then practise the five masteries of the second jhāna, and when you have succeeded and want to develop the third jhāna, you should reflect on the faults of the second jhāna and the advantages of the third jhāna. That is, the second jhāna is close to the first jhāna. The jhāna factor of joy in the second jhāna is gross, and makes the mind less calm compared with the third jhāna, which is without joy. Reflecting in this way, after arising from the second jhāna, you should develop a desire to attain the third jhāna, and again concentrate on the *pañbhāga nimitta*. In this way you will be able to attain the third jhāna, possessed of happiness and one-pointedness of mind. The Buddha said, "the happiness in the third

jhāna, which is devoid of sensual pleasure, surpasses all mundane happiness."

You should then practise the five masteries of the third jhāna, and when you succeed and want to develop the fourth jhāna, you should reflect on the faults of the third jhāna and advantages of the fourth jhāna. You should consider that the jhāna factor of happiness in the third jhāna is gross and makes the mind less calm compared with the fourth jhāna, which is without happiness. Reflecting in this way, after arising from the third jhāna, you should develop a desire to attain the fourth jhāna, and again concentrate on the *paṭibhāga nimitta*. In this way, you will be able to attain the fourth jhāna, possessed of equanimity and one-pointedness of mind. You should then practise the five masteries of the fourth jhāna.

With the attainment of the fourth jhāna, the breath stops completely. This completes the fourth stage in the development of Mindfulness of Breathing (*ānāpānasati*): "‘Calming the breath body I will breathe in,’ thus he trains himself, and, ‘Calming the breath body I will breathe out,’ thus he trains himself."

Jhāna consciousness takes the *paṭibhāga nimitta* as object. You may be interested to know where the nimitta comes from. Most mind states that arise dependent upon the heart-base produce breathing. A real *ānāpāna-nimitta* comes from the breath. However, not every mind state can produce a nimitta. Only a deeply concentrated mind can produce a nimitta. Therefore, an *ānāpāna-nimitta* appears based on the breath produced by a deep and concentrated mind.

What is this nimitta or light experienced in meditation? Every consciousness that arises dependent upon the heart-base can generate many consciousness-produced materiality (*cittaja rūpas*) or kalāpas. In each kalāpa there are eight inseparable elements (earth element, water element, fire element, wind element, color, smell, taste, and nutritive essence). Samatha-meditation-consciousness (*samatha-bhāvanā-citta*) and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness (*vipassanā-bhāvanā-citta*), which are devoid of sensual pleasure, can produce many powerful consciousness-produced kalāpas internally. The color in those kalāpas becomes very bright. The more powerful the Samatha-meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness are, the brighter the color. Because the kalāpas arise simultaneously and successively, the color of one kalāpa and the color of another kalāpa arise closely together like in an electric bulb, and light occurs.

Furthermore, in each kalāpa produced by Samatha-meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness, there is fire-element, which also can produce many generations of new kalāpas. These are called temperature-produced materiality (*utuja kalāpa*) because they are produced by fire-element or temperature (*utu*). This occurs not only internally but also externally. Again, the color in those kalāpas is also bright because of the power of Samatha-meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness. So the brightness of one color and the brightness of another color arise closely together like in an electric bulb.

Both the light of consciousness-produced materiality and the light of temperature-produced materiality occur simultaneously. Temperature-produced materiality arises both internally and externally, and spreads in ten directions up to the whole world system or universe (*cakkavāla*) or farther, depending on the power of the Samatha-meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness.

The Buddha's Knowledge of Analysing Mentality-and-Materiality can produce light up to ten thousand world systems. Other disciples' insight-knowledge can produce the light up to one league (*yojana*), two leagues, etc., in every direction depending on the power of their Samatha-meditation-consciousness and Vipassanā-meditation-consciousness.

When the mind is well trained in concentration, it becomes pliant, workable, wieldy, and adaptable, like pure gold, for insight meditation. The meditator who possesses fourth jhāna and intends to proceed to Vipassanā must, after emerging from fourth jhāna, discern the characteristic (*lakkaṇa*), function (*rasa*), manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*), and proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*) of the jhāna factors and the mental factors associated with them (that is, contact, feeling, perception, volition, and so on). Dependent upon what, do these mental factors arise? He finds out, mental factors are supported by the matter of the heart-base. He starts the discernment of mind-and-matter. For the detailed practice of Vipassanā, please refer to the Path of Purification (*Visuddhimagga*), starting from the description of Purification of View (*Diṭṭhivisuddhi-niddesa*).

FOUR ELEMENTS MEDITATION

Pure vipassanā meditators who have no base of jhāna usually start with Four Elements Meditation. Samatha vehicle meditators, who possess jhāna also need to practice Four Elements Meditation when they reach the first insight knowledge, discerning ultimate materiality.

The Buddha taught the brief method of Four Elements Meditation in the 'Discourse of The Four Foundations of Mindfulness', *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*; “A bhikkhu reviews this very body however it be positioned or placed as consisting of just elements thus, ‘There are in this body just the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.’”

1. The earth element has six characteristics: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness.
2. The water element has two characteristics: flowing and cohesion.
3. The fire element has two characteristics: heat and coldness.
4. The wind element has two characteristics: supporting and pushing.

The following instructions on The Four Elements Meditation practice are excerpts from the book 'Knowing And Seeing' by Venerable Pa Auk Sayadaw in Myanmar.

To learn this meditation, you must begin by learning how to discern each of the twelve qualities or characteristics of the four elements one at a time. Usually the beginner must be taught the characteristics that are easier to discern first, and the more difficult ones later. They are usually taught in this order: pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, heat, coldness, flowing, and cohesion. Each characteristic must be discerned first in one place in the body, and then one must try to discern it throughout the body.

1. To discern pushing, you may begin by being aware, through the sense of touch, of the pushing in the center of the head as you breathe in and breathe out. When you can discern the characteristic of pushing, you should concentrate on it until it becomes clear to your mind. Then you should move your awareness to another part of the body nearby, and look for pushing there. In this way you will slowly be able to discern pushing first in the head, then the neck, the trunk of the body, the arms, and the legs and feet. You must do this again and again, many times, until wherever you place your awareness in the body you can easily see pushing.

If the pushing of the breath in the center of the head is not easy to discern, then try being aware of pushing as the chest expands when breathing, or as the abdomen moves. If these are not clear, try to discern the pulse beat as the heart pumps, or any other obvious form of pushing. Wherever there is movement there is also pushing. Wherever you begin, you must continue to slowly develop your understanding so that you can discern pushing throughout the body, in some places it will be obvious, and in other places subtle, but it is present everywhere throughout the body.

2. When you are satisfied that you can do this, try to discern hardness. Begin by discerning hardness in the teeth. Bite your teeth together and feel how hard they are. Then relax your bite and feel the hardness of the teeth. When you can feel this, try to discern hardness throughout the body in a systematic way from head to feet, in the same way as you did to discern pushing. Care should be taken to not deliberately tense the body.

When you can discern hardness throughout the body, again look for pushing throughout the body. Alternate between these two, pushing and hardness, again and again, discerning pushing throughout the body, and then hardness throughout the body, from head to feet. Repeat this process many times, until you are satisfied that you can do it.

3. When you can discern pushing and hardness, try to discern roughness. Rub your tongue over the edge of your teeth, or brush your hand over the skin of your arm, and feel roughness. Now try to discern roughness throughout the body in a systematic way as before. If you cannot feel roughness, try pushing and hardness alternately, and roughness will become clear to you. When you can discern roughness, continue to discern pushing, hardness, roughness, one at a time, again and again, throughout the body from head to feet.

4. When you are satisfied that you can discern those three characteristics, look for heaviness throughout the body. Begin by placing one hand on top of the other in your lap, and feel that the top hand is heavy, or feel the heaviness of the head by bending it forward. Practice systematically until you can discern heaviness throughout the body. Then continue to discern the four characteristics: pushing, hardness, roughness, and heaviness, in turn, throughout the body.

5. When you are satisfied that you can discern those four characteristics, look for supporting throughout the body. Begin by relaxing your back so that your body bends forward. Then straighten your body and keep it straight and erect. The force which keeps the body straight, still and erect is supporting. Practice systematically until you can discern supporting throughout the body from head to feet. If you have difficulty in doing this, you can try to discern supporting together with hardness, as this can make it easier to discern

supporting. Then, when you can discern supporting easily, you should look for pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, and supporting throughout the body.

6. When you can discern these five, look for softness by pressing your tongue against the inside of your lower lip to feel its softness. Then relax your body and practise systematically until you can discern softness throughout the body. You can now look for pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, and softness throughout the body.

7. Next, look for smoothness by wetting your lips and rubbing your tongue over them from side to side. Practise as above until you can discern smoothness throughout the body. Then look for the seven characteristics throughout the body, one at a time.

8. Next, look for lightness by wagging a single finger up and down, and feeling its lightness. Practise until you can discern lightness throughout the body, and then, look for the eight characteristics as explained before.

9. Next, look for heat (or warmth) throughout the body. This is usually very easy to do. You can now discern nine characteristics.

10. Next, look for coldness by feeling the coldness of the breath as it enters the nostrils, and then discern it systematically throughout the body. You can now discern ten characteristics.

Note: The above ten characteristics are all known directly through the sense of touch, but the last two characteristics, flowing and cohesion, are known by inference based upon the other ten characteristics. That is a good reason to teach them last.

11. To discern cohesion, be aware of how the body is being held together by the skin, flesh, and sinews. The blood is being held in by the skin, like water in a balloon. Without cohesion the body would fall into separate pieces and particles. The force of gravity which keeps the body stuck to the earth is also cohesion. Develop it as before.

12. To discern flowing begin by being aware of the flowing of saliva into the mouth, the flowing of blood through the blood vessels, the flowing of air into the lungs, or the flowing of heat throughout the body. Develop it as before.

If you experience difficulty in trying to discern flowing or cohesion, you should discern the previous ten qualities again and again, one at a time throughout the body. When you have become skilled in this, you will find that the quality of cohesion also becomes clear. If cohesion still does not become clear, then pay attention again and again to just the qualities of

pushing and hardness. Eventually you should feel as if the whole body is wrapped up in the coils of a rope. Discern this as the quality of cohesion. If the quality of flowing does not become clear, then look at it with the quality of coldness, heat, or pushing, and you should then be able to discern the quality of flowing.

When you can discern all twelve characteristics clearly throughout the body, from head to feet, you should continue to discern them again and again in this same order. When you are satisfied that you can do this, you should rearrange the order to the one first given above, which was: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, flowing, cohesion, heat, coldness, supporting, and pushing. In that order, try to discern each characteristic, one at a time from head to feet. You should try to develop this until you can do it quite quickly, at least three rounds in a minute.

While practising in this way, for some meditators the elements will not be balanced; some elements may become excessive and unbearable. Particularly hardness, heat, and pushing can become excessively strong. If this occurs, you should pay more attention to the quality opposite the one that is in excess, and continue to develop concentration in that way. You may find that this will balance the elements again, and it is for this reason that twelve characteristics were taught in the first place. When the elements are balanced it is easier to attain concentration.

For balancing the elements, the opposites are: hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, heaviness and lightness, flowing and cohesion, heat and coldness, and supporting and pushing.

If one member of these pairs is in excess, balance it by paying attention to its opposite. For example, if flowing is in excess pay more attention to cohesion, or if supporting is in excess pay more attention to pushing. The rest can be treated in a similar way.

Having now become skilled in the discernment of the twelve characteristics in the whole body, and those characteristics having become clear, you should note the first six together at one glance as the earth element, the next two as the water element, the next two as the fire element, and the last two as the air element. You should continue to discern earth, water, fire, and air in order to calm the mind and attain concentration. You should do this again and again hundreds, thousands, or millions of times.

At this point, a good method to use is to take an overview of the body all at once and to continue to perceive the four elements. In order to keep the mind calm and concentrated, you should not move the awareness from one part of the body to another as before. Instead take an overall view of the body. It is usually best to take the overview as if you were looking from behind the

shoulders. It can also be done as if looking from above the head down, but this may lead to tension and imbalance of the elements in some meditators.

As you continue to develop concentration based upon the four elements, and begin to approach access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*), you will see different kinds of light. For some meditators the light begins as a smoke-like grey. If you continue to discern the four elements in this grey light, it will become whiter like cotton wool, and then bright white, like clouds. At this point, your whole body will appear as a white form. You should continue to concentrate on discerning the four elements in the white form, and you will find it becomes transparent like a block of ice or glass.

If you continue to discern the four elements in that transparent lump or block, you will find that it sparkles and emits light. When you can concentrate continuously at least half an hour, you have reached access concentration. With that light, try to discern the space element in that transparent form, by looking for small spaces in it. You will find that the transparent form breaks down into small particles which are called *rūpa kalāpas*. Having reached this stage, which is Purification of Mind (*citta-visuddhi*), you can proceed to develop Purification of View (*diṭṭhi-visuddhi*), by analysing these *rūpa kalāpas*.

That access concentration is the resting place for bare-insight meditators who have no previous *Samatha jhāna*, as they start their practice directly with the Four Elements Meditation. If tiredness occurs during *Vipassanā*, they can rest in this access concentration, just as the *Samatha* meditator rests in *jhāna*. Then they emerge with clarity of mind and feel refreshed again for *Vipassanā*.

The use of *jhāna* as a resting place is explained by a simile in the commentary, the 'Two Kinds of Thoughts', *Dvedhāvitakka Sutta* of *Majjhima Nikāya*. Sometimes during a battle, the warriors would feel tired. Also, the enemy might be strong. At that time many arrows would be flying. The warriors, feeling some weakness, would retreat to their fort. Behind its walls they were safe from the enemy's arrows. They would rest and their tiredness would gradually disappear. Then, feeling strong and powerful again, they would leave their fort and return to the battlefield. Similarly, *jhāna* is just like the fort, a resting place for *Vipassanā* meditation. There is much to discern in *Vipassanā* meditation, so meditators greatly benefit from having a resting place.

For the practical experience of different *Samatha* meditation subjects leading up to attainment of *jhāna*, and *Vipassanā* leading up to attainment of *Nibbāna*, you are welcome to meditate at:

Pa Auk Tawya Forest Meditation Centre
Mawlamyine Township, Mon State
Myanmar (Burma)

*May you be able to practice
the three trainings of
morality, concentration, and wisdom,
eventually to extinguish the fire of
greed, hatred, and delusion,
and attain to the end of suffering
inherent in all conditioned
phenomena.*

APPENDIX 1

The Twelve Unwholesome Consciousness (Akusalacittani)

- a. Eight Consciousness Rooted in Greed (lobhamulacittani)
 1. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, associated with wrong view, unprompted.
 1. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, associated with wrong view, prompted.
 2. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, dissociated from wrong view, unprompted.
 3. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, dissociated from wrong view, prompted.
 5. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with wrong view, unprompted.
 6. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with wrong view, prompted.
 7. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from wrong view, unprompted.
 8. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from wrong view, prompted.

- b. Two Consciousness Rooted in Hatred. (dosamulacittani)
 9. One consciousness, accompanied by displeasure, associated with aversion, unprompted.
 10. One consciousness, accompanied by displeasure, associated with aversion, prompted.

These two types of consciousness are associated with aversion.

- c. Two Consciousness Rooted in Delusion. (mohamulacittani)
 11. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with doubt.
 12. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with restlessness.

These two types of consciousness involve sheer delusion.

APPENDIX 2

The Eight Sense-Sphere Wholesome Consciousness (Kamavacara-kusalacittani)

1. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, associated with knowledge, unprompted.
2. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, associated with knowledge, prompted.
3. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, dissociated from knowledge, unprompted.
4. One consciousness, accompanied by joy, dissociated from knowledge, prompted.
5. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with knowledge, unprompted.
6. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, associated with knowledge, prompted.
7. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from knowledge, unprompted.
8. One consciousness, accompanied by equanimity, dissociated from knowledge, prompted.

Charts List

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Pāli-English Glossary

Abhidhamma	Higher Teachings of the Buddha
āciṅṇa kamma	habitual kamma
adhigama-suta	direct knowledge
adhimokkha	decision
ādīnava	danger
adosa	non-hatred
adukkhamasukha	neutral feeling
agama-suta	learning knowledge
āhāra rūpa	matte-born-by-nutriment
ahirika	shamelessness
ākāsānañcāyatana	base of infinite space
ākīñcāññāyatana	base of nothingness
ahosi kamma	defunct kamma
akaliko	takes no time
akusala	unwholesome
akusalacetasika	unwholesome mental factors
akusalacittani	unwholesome consciousness
alobha	non-greed
amoha	non-delusion
anāgami	non-returner
aññasamanā-cetasika	variable factors
anatta	non-self
ānāpānasati	mindfulness of breathing
aṅga	factor
anicca	impermanence
anottappa	fearlessness of wrongdoing
anuloma	conformity
appanā	jhāna absorption concentration
aparāpariyavedanīya	indefinitely effective kamma
āpodhātu	water element
arahant	one who had freed oneself from all sufferings, a Noble One
ariya-citta	noble consciousness
arūpāvacaracitta	immaterial-sphere consciousness
asaṅkheyya	incalculable aeons
asaṅkhata Dhamma	unconditioned dhamma
āsanna kamma	death proximate kamma
asañña satta	non-percipient beings
attavādupādāna	clinging to a doctrine of self

atīta-bhavaṅga avijjā avinibbhoga-rūpas	past bhavaṅga ignorance inseparable elements
bhaṅga bhava bhavaṅga bhavaṅga-calana bhavaṅgupaccheda bhaya brahma realm & brahmavihāra byāpāda	dissolution existence, becoming factor of existence, life-continuum vibrating bhavaṅga arrest bhavaṅga fearful inhabitant of fine-material sphere immaterial sphere realm sublime abidings ill-will
cāga cakkavāla cakkhuvīññaṇa carana carita cetanā cetasika chanda citta cittaja-rūpa cittakammaññatā cittalahutā cittamudutā citta-niyāma cittapāguññata cittapassaddhi citta visuddhi cittujukatā cuticitta	generosity universe, world system eye-consciousness conduct temperature volition mental factors desire consciousness consciousness-born-matter wildness of consciousness lightness of consciousness malleability of consciousness fixed law of consciousness proficiency of consciousness tranquility of consciousness purification of mind rectitude of consciousness death consciousness
dāna dhamma dhatu diṭṭhadhammavedaniya diṭṭhi	charity Truths; teachings of Buddha elements immediate effective kamma view

diṭṭhi visuddhi diṭṭhupādāna domanasa dosa dosamulacittani dukkha	purification of view clinging to false views unpleasant feeling hatred consciousness rooted in hatred suffering, unsatisfactoriness
gandha garuka kamma gati nimitta ghānaviññana gotrabu	smell weighty kamma sign of destination nose-consciousness change-of-lineage
hiri	shame
indriya issā	controlling faculty envy
janaka kamma jāti javana jhāna jivhāviññana jīvitindriya	productive kamma nature, birth impulsion (running swiftly) absorbtion concentration tongue-consciousness life faculty
kappas kamma kāmacchanda kāma-taṇhā	aeons actions sensual desire craving for sensual pleasures thinking its permanent
kammassakata own kammaṭṭhāna kāmmāvacaracitta kāmupādāna karunā kasiṇa subjects katattā kamma kayākammaññata kāyalahutā kāyamudutā	all beings are owners of their kamma meditation subjects sense-sphere consciousness clinging to sensual pleasures compassion the device of meditation reserve kamma wieldiness of mental body lightness of mental body malleability of mental body

kayāpāguññatā	proficiency of mental body
kāyapassaddhi	tranquility of mental body
kāyaviññana	body-consciousness
kāyujukatā	rectitude of mental body
khandha	aggregate
kiicca ghana	compactness of the functions
kilesa	defilements
kiriya	functional
kriyā citta	functional consciousness
kukkucca	worry
kusala	wholesome
kusala citta	wholesome consciousness
lakkhana	characteristic
lobha	greed
lobhamulacittani	consciousness rooted in greed
lokuttaracitta	supramundane consciousness
macchariya	avarice
magga	path
mahābhūta	great elements
manasikāra	attention
māna	conceit
mano	mind; consciousness
maranāsanna vīthi	near-death cognitive process
maranānussati	mindfulness of death
mettā	loving-kindness
middha	torpor
moha	delusion
mohamulacittani	consciousness rooted in
delusion	
muditā	appreciative joy
nāma	mind
ñāṇa	knowledge, insight
n’evasaññān āsaññayatana	base of neither-perception-nor- non-perception
nipphannarūpa	concretely produced matter
nibbāna	deathless state
nibbidā	disenchantment
nirodha samāpatti	Attainment of Cessation
nīvaraṇa	hindrances

ojā	nutritive essence
ottappa	fear of wrongdoing
paccaya	condition
paccaya-pariggaha-ñāna	knowledge of Discerning
Causes	and Conditions
paccupaṭṭhāna	manifestation
padaṭṭhāna	proximate cause
pañña	insight, wisdom
pañña sikkhā	wisdom training
pañca-dvāravajjana	five door adverting
consciousness	
paramatha sacca	ultimate truth
parikamma	preparation
Parinibbāna	final Nibbāna
pariññeyya	phenomena (five aggregates
and	their causes) should be
realized by	insight
pathāna	method of Conditional
Relations	
pathavīdhātu	earth element
paṭibhāga nimitta	counterpart sign
Paṭicca-samuppāda	Dependent Origination
paṭisandhiccitta	rebirth consciousness
patisaṅkhā	reflective contemplation
pavati	within lifetime
phala	fruition
phala samāpatti	fruition attainment
phassa	contact
pīti	joy
puthujjana	worldlings
rasa	taste
rūpa	matter
rūpa kalāpas	sub-atomic particles
rūparūpa	matter matter
rūpāvacaracitta	fine-material-sphere
	consciousness
sabbaññuta-ñāṇa	omniscient knowledge
sabhāva	intrinsic nature

sabhāvarūpa	matter possessing intrinsic
nature	
saddhā	faith
sakadāgami	once-returner
sakkāya-diṭṭhi	personality view
salāyatana	six sense bases
samatha	tranquility meditation
sammā ājīva	right livelihood
sammādhī sikkhā	concentration training
sammā diṭṭhi	right view
sammā kamanta	right action
sammāpatti	eight attainments
sammā sammādhī	right concentration
sammasana	comprehension
sammā saṅkappa	right thought
sammāvācā	right speech
sammuti sacca	conventional truth
sampañcchana	receiving consciousness
saṃsāra	round of rebirths
sandhāna	continuity of process
saṅkhāra	mental or kammic formations
saṅkhārupekkhā	equanimity towards formations
saṅkhatadhamma	conditioned dhamma
sañña	perception
santati ghana	compactness of continuity
santīrana	investigating consciousness
sassata-diṭṭhi	view of eternalism
sati	mindfulness
sīlā	morality
sīlābbataparāmāsa	attachment to rites and rituals
sīlā sikkhā	morality training
sīlā visuddhi	purification of virtue
sobhanacetāsika	beautiful factors
somanassa	pleasant feeling
sotāpanna	stream-enterer
sotaviññāna	ear-consciousness
suddha-manodvāra vīthi	bare mind-door process
sudha-vipassanā yānika	dry or pure insight meditator
sukha	happiness
tadārammaṇa	registering consciousness
taṇhā	craving

tatramajjhataṭṭā	neutrality of mind
tejodhātu	fire element
thīna	sloth
ṭhiti	static
tipiṭaka	three collections of Buddha's teachings
tāvatisā	Deva realm of Gods of Thirty-three
uccheda diṭṭhi	view of annihilationism
uddhacca	restlessness
udayabbaya	rise and fall
uggaha nimitta	learning sign
upacāra samādhi	access concentration
upādāna	clinging
upapajjavedaniya	subsequent effective kamma
upekkhā	neutral feeling or equanimity
uppāda	arising
utu niyāma	law of temperature
vaṇṇa	colour
vaya	dissolution
vayodhātu	wind element
vedanā	feeling
vibhava-taṇhā	craving for non-existence
vicāra	sustained application of mind
vicikicchā	doubt
vijjā	knowledge
vinaya	Code of Conduct
viññāṇa	consciousness
viññānacāyatana	base of infinite consciousness
vipāka	resultant
vipāka citta	resultant consciousness
vīriya	energy
visuddhi	pure
vitakka	initial application of mind
vīthimutta	process freed
vipassanā	insight meditation
vodanā	purification
votthapana	determining
yoniso manasikāra	wise attention
yojana	one league

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Background Information of Sayalay Susila

Sayalay Susilā has been a Theravāda nun for the last 15 years, currently with the lineage of the well-renowned Venerable Pa Auk Tawaya Sayadaw, Myanmar.

She was born in 1963, Malaysia. She began to develop her keen interest in the practice of vipassanā meditation while still in University. She graduated in 1988 with a Degree in Mass Communication, University Science Malaysia.

Disenchanted with worldly pleasure, she was ordained at the age of 28 at the Malaysian Buddhist Meditation Centre in Penang, Malaysia.

After six months of her ordination in 1991, Sayalay Susilā continued her long & intensive meditation practice in Paṇḍitārāma, Myanmar, under the straight guidance of the well-known Venerable Sayadaw U Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa. In 1994, she was fortunate to learn from another world-known meditation teacher, Venerable Pa Auk Tawaya Sayadaw, Aggamahākammaṭṭhānācariya, at the Pa Auk Meditation Centre, Myanmar, where she remained until today.

Sayalay Susilā is one of the leading disciples of Venerable Pa Auk Tawaya Sayadaw, who is responsible for the propagation and dissemination of the Dhamma to foreign countries. Her command of Abhidhamma knowledge and linguistic skills are an asset to Pa Auk Meditation Centre. Since 1997 she became the interpreter for Chinese speaking Mahāyāna Saṅgha and yogis. From 1998-2001, she accompanied and interpreted for Pa Auk Sayadaw at meditation retreats held in Taiwan.

It is from the year 2000, with the encouragement of her teacher, Pa Auk Sayadaw, Sayalay Susilā began to teach the profound Abhidhamma in Taiwan, Malaysia (Penang) and Singapore. In 2002, she conducted a 10-day Abhidhamma course in Toronto, followed by a series of Dhamma talks on meditation, in the various states of Canada and USA. Sayalay's Dhamma talks were given at renowned Buddhist centres such as Bhāvanā Society Monastery (West Virginia); Spirit Rock (California); and Barre Buddhist

studies Centre (Massachusetts). In 2004, she had a series of Abhidhamma talks held in Sydney, Australia.

Sayalay Susilā is truly gifted in the ability to present the most profound and difficult part of the Buddha's Dhamma, Abhidhamma in a lucid way.